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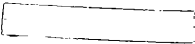
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TITLE PAGE.

T.S.C.Maxwell.



**In what way can children's drawings together
with a personal construct discussion help to
illuminate our understanding of their views
of their educational experiences?**

Doctor of Education (EdD).

Submitted March 2001.

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ABSTRACT.

This study is an exploration into the views that primary school pupils have of their educational experiences. It is considered that pupils have a right to be asked about their experiences, to be listened to and to have their views acknowledged and acted upon.

The preliminary study in year 1 involved asking twelve groups of six mixed ability and randomly selected ten year old pupils to produce two drawings of themselves in happy and unhappy situations in school. The drawings were thematically analysed into content orientated categories. On reflection it was considered necessary to develop this method of collecting pupil views within a personal construct conversation. This development contributed to validating the interpretation of the drawings and also facilitated a learning conversation with the pupil.

In year 2/3 of the study an opportunity sample of thirteen junior aged pupils on the special needs register in a different school were individually invited to produce a series of drawings and to take part in two conversations about their experiences in school. The drawings were thematically analysed both individually and as a group for their content. A personal construct psychology approach was used during the conversations to elicit the constructs and views of the pupils which were then thematically analysed for both manifest and latent content. A series of discussions were also held with the school additional / special needs coordinator regarding each pupil and the group as a whole. This enabled the voice of the pupil to be validated and 'taken back' to be heard within the school system.

The findings indicate that the social activities in school were of far greater importance for the pupils than their academic or formal learning experiences. Peer relationships were paramount and these tended to define the positive or negative experiences the pupil had of school in general. The pupils were able to show they have a range of problem solving strategies for resolving peer group difficulties. These included pro-actively inviting peers

to join in activities in an inclusive way, to mediating in negative interactions and reactively seeking help from a range of other peers and adults in school. Home and family situations were occasionally drawn and discussed whilst teachers and the formal learning experiences were rarely drawn or referred to in the conversations.

Implications are that pupils of this age do have a view, want to express it and benefit from the opportunity and climate which encourages this expression. The pupils also need to know that their views will be listened to and acted upon. This could inform school staff of the importance that pupils attach to peer relationships and the range of conflict resolution strategies they have. The pupils could benefit from opportunities to develop their expressive vocabulary and 'emotional literacy' in order to better understanding their feelings and improve their ability to describe experiences. This can raise a whole school understanding of the importance of listening to children in general and to unrepresented and often unheard groups of pupils.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION and RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

A) Introduction.

This dissertation is submitted for the Open University Doctorate in Education and was conducted within the following parameters.

- * Line of study - Inclusive/Special Education.
- * Area of study - Pupil Perspectives and Participation.

This chapter considers why it is important to ask children their views of their educational experiences, how these views can be sought and documented and how the research questions have been developed. The rationale for the methods chosen is also discussed.

The aim of this study was to explore educational experiences from the pupils' point of view and to investigate the differences that might occur between individuals through their drawings and conversations. It was of paramount importance within this aim to consider pupils' rights when seeking their views and the possible conflicts that might occur between researchers and learners within the contexts that are being investigated.

In order to explore, illuminate and document primary school children's experiences of school I asked them to draw a series of pictures of themselves in school and then to take part in a personal construct conversation using the drawings as a common focus. The educational experiences are considered to be all the learning that takes place within both the formal prescribed curriculum and the hidden informal curriculum.

The research questions developed from considering the following issues.

- * Why should educationalists consider the child's perspective in the educational process?
- * What part do children play in the process of their own education and development in school?

- * How can educationalists go about finding out what pupils think and feel?
- * What issues might be raised and addressed within these questions regarding children being perceived and categorised as having special educational needs?

B) Why ask children what they think?

The Central Advisory Council for Education (1967) in the Plowden Report considered a specific version of child-centred education when it stated that 'at the heart of the educational process lies the child' (para 9). In this account the child is an agent of their own learning and for whom learning proceeds by discovery through first hand experience. Knowledge is not divided into separate compartments, but rather is integrated with an acceptance that the presence of childhood is a special privileged state. Further the school is seen as a community in which children learn to live first and foremost as children and 'not as future adults' (para 505). Children's views therefore represent not only the individual's experiences, but also in a sense the context and the community in which those experiences were created.

Davie et al (1996) refers to children as the 'ultimate consumers of the product of education'. Whilst the commercial style of the language may well be open to challenge, the understanding that children are central in the process of education can be accepted. Pupil views of their experiences in that process are important therefore and should be sought and asked. Davie (1993) considers that listening to children embodies the central issues of efficacy and equity. He feels that in seeking the views and opinions of children then this naturally implies heeding those views. Gersch (1996) also argues for the increased participation of children in their own assessments. He advocates the use of non directive methods and in particular discusses the use of personal construct psychology techniques as developed by Kelly (1995).

Glenny (1996) also refers to the use of personal construct theory in working with children and considers that it allows the researcher to work with and within the child's own construing system. Mortimer (1996) builds on this way of exploring the child's view, particularly with young children with special educational needs. She considers that asking children through a range of methods about how they feel about their school experiences can help to involve them in their own assessments. In particular asking children to draw can form a natural part of the dialogue. The method used in this current study of asking pupils to produce drawings and to take part in conversations stems from the work of Ravenette (1988b) and Beaver (1996). They advocate children eliciting their own agenda for discussion through drawings and conversations based upon personal construct psychology.

I feel that the rights of the child to be asked, to be heard and to be listened to are central to this research. This is supported and documented in the following legislation and advice. The United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Department of Health (1989) The Children Act, the Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs from the Department for Education and Employment (1994), the Index for Inclusion by Booth et al (2000) and the draft revised Code of Practice (specifically Chapter 3) from the Department of Education and Employment (2000).

All of these documents emphasise the child being asked and consulted in a way and at a level which is commensurate with their conceptual ability and development. Children are viewed as being capable of reliably reporting experiences and views and thereby being able to contribute to their own assessments and plans about their future.

The rationale for this study therefore is that pupils have a right not only to be asked for their views about education and learning, but that those views should also be listened to and acted upon.

C) Using Children's Work.

I believe one of the pathways to seeking, reaching and documenting pupils thoughts and emotions is through their work and in particular through their drawings. The rationale for using children's drawings is that they can be a useful source of evidence of their knowledge, understanding and interests. They can also provide something 'concrete' and tangible which can then be a focus for discussion either at the time or at a later date with the pupil.

I consider that drawings produced by pupils can also reflect experiences which may be located at an unconscious level and are therefore unable to be adequately explained or articulated purely with verbal methods. Furth (1988) discusses the way in which children's drawings can provide an insight into the unconscious aspects of feeling, thought and behaviour which may not be articulated through other more conventional methods of communicating with children.

D) Preliminary Study - Year 1.

The method of collecting drawings was trialed and documented in the year 1 preliminary study. Groups of children were asked to draw pictures of themselves in school using the elements of being happy and unhappy. The research questions focussed on using drawings as a tool for accessing the unconscious elements of the pupil's understanding. Reflection and evaluation of year 1 has led me to a greater understanding about collecting pupil views in this study and to a realisation that any information gained in this way should be supported and validated through other sources. The drawings can help to support and facilitate other means of 'finding out' which can include discussions and conversations with the pupils in order to validate what might otherwise be only my interpretation. This development could also include the views of the significant adults involved in the pupil's learning process.

This aspect of returning to the pupils and visiting them over time represents a development in the research process which is a direct outcome of the reflection from the preliminary study. Asking pupils to talk about their drawings can also help to validate the interpretations and understandings shared by the participant and the researcher. This was not part of the original research design in the preliminary study, but is considered to be of central importance in the present study..

Drawings are now viewed therefore as a vehicle for accessing pupils' views of themselves as learners in conjunction with a personal construct psychology (PCP) approach using conversations and discussions.

E) Development of the research questions.

The research questions for this study have evolved from the evaluation and reflection of the preliminary study in Year 1. From the preliminary work I developed the understanding that there may have been an undue emphasis on the 'unconscious content' expressed in the drawings collected to the neglect of their usefulness as a vehicle for supporting conversations and dialogues with the pupils. I subsequently considered that trying to research within the paradigms of the psycho dynamic model (of drawing interpretation) and that of a personal construct psychology approach (using drawings to support conversations) was too broad and possibly conflicting for this study. The latter method was considered more appropriate.

In this study there was an attempt to both explore and 'see' as closely as possible the educational world from the point of view of children. Pupils construct their own perceptions and perspectives of their experiences and their subsequent actions then become part of the process. There is therefore an interactive and dynamic model of understanding pupils' experiences.

This model accepts that viewpoints and understandings are liable to change in a reactive way where circumstances may influence and alter our

perception of an experience. We may be influenced by the ability to reflect upon experiences which changes our initial perception of those occurrences. We may also be influenced however prior to an experience where we are enlightened beforehand and encouraged to anticipate about how things are going to be. This position within personal construct psychology therefore accepts that change for individuals is both central and possible.

This dynamic model accepts that as the researcher I bring to the study my own values, beliefs and perceptions. These will impact and influence the interpretations and understandings I make of both the pupil's work and their viewpoints. There is an exchange of information in the dialogue therefore between the researcher and the participant which aims to emphasise that the pupil's personal viewpoints and the child centred nature of the study are central.

This supports my view that an assessment framework should include the pupil's own views of their lives, their interpretation of their work and therefore that they need to be actively engaged in the assessment procedure. Their views should also be seen within the context in which they are gained and gathered. That is, the context of the school and in the interactions and relationships with other people within the school. It also respects the need to facilitate the child's voice being heard in school and the role of the Additional / Special educational needs coordinator (A/SenCo) to assist with this process.

F) Research Questions for the current study.

The research now focusses on using the pupils' work in the form of their drawings as a tool for talking about and listening to their views of their educational experiences. This position still acknowledges that drawings can help to raise unconscious aspects of people's experiences into their consciousness.

The Research Questions.

- 1) How can children's drawings help to illuminate the educational world of the pupil and what do they tell us about their experiences of school?
- 2) Is the use of pupils' drawings a justifiable way of supporting and facilitating conversations and discussions with primary aged pupils?
- 3) What information can be gained through a personal construct interview with primary aged pupils regarding their educational experiences?
- 4) Can a series of discussions with the school A/SenCo help to both validate the voice of the pupil and ensure that it is heard within the school system?

G) Possible issues raised in the current research.

The position taken in this study accepts that pupils are individuals who have individual needs and should therefore be recognised as such regardless of their particular need. Lewis (1995) considers that pupils with special educational needs are as diverse a group of people as the rest of the population and grouping them under a particular label encourages a false homogeneity in the perceptions of both pupils and staff. Booth et al (2000) argue against labelling and consider it a barrier to participation. Those pupils who are categorised and labelled as having special educational needs and are therefore supposedly an identifiable group contradicts this understanding.

It may be an artificial distinction therefore to distinguish between one pupil and another in terms of categorising them, let alone to subdivide the classification further within the category of special educational needs such as having moderate, severe or behavioural learning difficulties. All pupils should have equality of educational opportunity regardless of their individual or additional needs. There should however be an acceptance that there is a continuum of educational needs with the understanding that some

pupils may have additional needs which reflect their particular learning, social, emotional and behavioural dispositions.

It is necessary however to acknowledge that the concept of 'special educational needs' remains within the culture and framework of all schools and the categorisation of pupils continues for administrative purposes. Nevertheless to address this issue within the line of study it has been necessary to work with an opportunity sample of pupils placed on the additional/special needs register of a junior school.

H) How I went about the study.

A series of semi structured open-ended situations were created with individual pupils which allowed them to produce a series of drawings about themselves in school. These drawings were then used to facilitate conversations between myself as the researcher and the pupil as participant both at the time of drawing and at a later date using a personal construct psychology (PCP) approach.

The pupil's drawings and discussions were supported with a series of conversations with the school A/SenCo. These initially followed each pupil session and sought to gather further information about the pupil. There was a subsequent culminating conversation with the A/SenCo where pupil data was shared and fed back to inform the school. This allowed the pupil's voice to be 'heard' within school. Parents and class teachers were also considered as significant adults in the pupils' lives, but due to practical difficulties their views were unable to be included in the study. Their absence is acknowledged.

I) Conclusion.

The position taken in this study and the research questions addressed are based on the following premises and lines of enquiry. That,

- ◆ The research is child centred as defined by Donaldson (1978) and Dunn (1988).
- ◆ The 'voice' of the child is important and should be sought in a range of ways, listened to and respected.
- ◆ It is valid to seek a range of views from children about themselves as learners and their education. It is also valid to seek the views of other significant adults such as parents, the school A/SenCo and other staff about the pupil as 'self as learner'.
- ◆ Using children's work can be central to understanding their perspective of themselves and their learning. Children's drawings can offer a particular insight into pupils' nonverbal and unconscious views of themselves as 'self as learner'.
- ◆ It is important to develop an assessment framework which helps pupils to be actively engaged in the process and to therefore truly participate in the research.
- ◆ In order to help understand the pupil's perspective it is essential to elicit their model world of themselves as learners and their learning environment.
- ◆ Children actively construct their understandings of the world and create their own model in order to make sense of situations and interactions. This is a social constructivist position which supports the use of personal construct theory.

Donaldson (1978) considers 'child centred' research to focus on the whole child when trying to discover what they understand or are capable of. There is also a need to consider the situation from the child's point of view, that is, how they are trying to make sense of their world and their experiences.

The child's interpretation of their experiences may be quite different from that intended by the adult. Person centred research is a basic principle which underpins constructivist learning theory. This emphasises the pupils' ownership and control of their own learning and knowledge and their progressive construction of cognitive representations through experience and actions in the world.

I consider therefore that it is legitimate and reasonable to gather pupils' views about their learning experiences by using both verbal and non verbal methods. Asking pupils to draw pictures of themselves in school in a range of situations and then talking about their pictures and themselves can give pupils a voice and help them to be part of their own education.

CHAPTER 2.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

A) Introduction.

This chapter addresses the issue that children as pupils in school are entitled to be heard, to be listened to and to be respected in terms of having a voice and a say in their own lives. This position has emerged from the concept that children have rights in terms of human rights, have opportunities in terms of equal opportunities (irrespective of gender, race, religion, disability, additional / special educational needs, creed and age) and should be treated with respect in that they have a view about their experiences and what might make those experiences more positive.

These views can be collected in a number of ways which reflect the pupil's ability, understanding and conceptual development. The methods used in this study involve using children's drawings as a form of communication which then support and facilitate a personal construct psychology conversation with the pupil.

B) Pupil Perspectives and Perceptions.

The Legislative and Legal Background.

The emergence both politically and socially of the idea that children have a viewpoint about their educational lives and experiences can be seen within the context of a number of educational and legal acts. The 1980's in particular were punctuated by four major Education Acts; of which the Education Act of 1981 in particular and the Education Reform Act of 1988 were to have a lasting impact on the education and assessment of pupils described under the former act as having learning difficulties.

The Department of Education and Science (1981) through the Education Act (1981) gave statutory force to the findings of the Warnock Committee Report (1978). The main objective of the 1981 Act was to pave the way for

the majority of pupils with special educational needs to be educated in mainstream schools. The act instructed schools and LEA's that when they were in the process of assessing needs of pupils, to distinguish between the different stages of assessment identified by Warnock. That is, mainly the school-based assessment stages 1-3 and the multi professional assessment stages 4-5. The Education Reform Act, Department of Education (1988) introduced the concept of a legal entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum to be shared among all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

This legislation began to emphasise the concept of pupils having rights and entitlements within the educational system. This development of pupils having a more central role in decisions about their lives was also seen at the time within an international context when the United Nations held a Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) [Approved 1993]. This stated that all rights under the convention must be available to all children without any discrimination whatsoever. This development had implications for pupils who were considered to have special educational needs to have a right under the 1988 Education Reform Act to a full and balanced curriculum.

Much past legislation in education has been silent on the issue of the child's right to be consulted. Even in an area such as the choice of school, where parents have a right now to state preferences, there is no mention of the child.

The 1981 Education Act which chartered parental partnership in special needs was however silent on the voice of the child. However, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) stated in Article 14 that all children should have the opportunity to express views in processes affecting them. The Children Act (1989) was the major piece of UK legislation which has focussed professional attention on children's perspectives, with a statutory duty, in section 1(1), on those responsible for identifying children's needs to take account of the ascertainable wishes and

feelings of the child in care proceedings. It has also led to interest in education as to the importance and best ways to ascertain children's views.

The need to consider children's views in the assessment of their special educational needs was promoted firstly by the Department of Education and Science (1989, circular 22/89) advice. This stated that the feelings and perceptions of the child should be taken into account and the concept of partnership should wherever possible, be extended to older children and young persons.

The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, Department for Education and Employment (1994) has given both legal weight and guidance at a national level to involving children with special educational needs in their own educational planning and statutory assessment. The code in sections 2.34 and 2.37 documents that the effectiveness of any assessment and intervention will be influenced by the involvement and interests of the child. The benefits were as follows;

Practical - children hold important and relevant information. Their support is crucial to the effective implementation of any individual education programme.

Principle - children have a right to be heard. They should be encouraged to participate in decision making about provision to meet their special educational needs.

The Code stated that schools should consider how they;

- * Involve pupils in decision making processes.
- * Determine the pupil's level of participation, taking into account approaches to identification, assessment and intervention which are suitable for his or her age, ability and past experiences.
- * Record the pupil's views in identifying their difficulties, setting goals, agreeing a developmental strategy, monitoring and reviewing progress.

- * Involve pupils in implementing individual education plans.

The Green Paper 'Excellence for All Children' (DfEE, 1997) and the associated Programme of Action for Special Educational Needs (DfEE, 1998) both stated the requirement to consult with children in clear terms. The programme refers to the principle of having regard to the ascertainable wishes and feelings of the child and that there will be a strengthening of the Code of Practice to encourage LEA's and schools to seek and take account of the views of the child throughout the SEN process. The plan encourages LEA's to experiment with situations where children with SEN, or with disabilities have an opportunity to meet local policy makers.

More recently the draft revised Code of Practice (DfEE, 2000a) includes a chapter on pupil participation which states '... this chapter is about the right of children with special educational needs to be involved in making decisions and exercising choice' (page, 13). In Chapter 3.4 it continues to say that all children should be involved in making decisions right from the start and the ways in which children are encouraged to participate should reflect their evolving maturity. Participation in education is seen as a process necessitates all children being given the opportunity to make choices and to understand that their views matter. It is important to consult with pupils who need support to ensure that such support is provided in a timely and sensitive way which enables them to fully participate in learning.

The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) (DfEE, Department of Health and the Home Office) also supports the importance of communicating with children. It states that it is particularly important at turning points in their lives that 'children are enabled to express their wishes and feelings; make sense of their circumstances and contribute to decisions that affect them' (section 3.4).

Further documentation, DfEE (2000b) comments on the aspect of seeking pupil views as a highly skilled and professional activity. It states that a

core function of any educational psychology service is through work with individual children in their assessment and intervention work. It would be expected that effective practice will include a direct focus on listening to children's views and increasing their involvement in the arrangements being made for them, including IEPs.

The national official picture therefore clearly promotes both the consultation and participation of pupils in their own learning. The focus of this research is to work with junior aged children on the special needs register and examine the contribution that their drawings can make within a personal construct discussion to an understanding of their educational needs.

Gersch (1996) reviewed the contribution that professionals can make when assessing pupils' needs. He considered it to be important that pupils should,

- * Play a crucial part and contribute to their own assessment.
- * Be able to give a genuine view of their learning difficulties or other difficulties in school situations.
- * Be asked if they think there is a problem. That is, do they see themselves as having special educational needs or is this the adult perception.

Savva (1987) developed this idea that any approach to understanding the learning difficulties of pupils should take account of their view of themselves, the curriculum and the school. That is, to try to understand their thoughts and the communication systems they use to operate within the education system. This wider aspect of understanding pupils in all their educational experiences acknowledges the influence of both the formal and informal curriculum. This is further recognised in the draft Code of Practice, (DfEE, 2000a) which considers the importance of the pastoral aspects of school and that all pupils should be involved in and can contribute to both their own education and the wider life of school.

Savva (1987) describes how there may be a mismatch between how learning can be presented and how it is perceived and received by the pupil. That is, there may be a mismatch between a pupil's needs and a school's needs. A learning difficulty can therefore arise from two different points of view of the same area. That is, learning occurs within a context and schools should take account of the full range of factors contributing to that context. The draft Code of Practice (DfEE, 2000a) emphasises the rights of children with special educational needs to be involved in making decisions and exercising choice in school. It makes specific reference to pupils being consulted about their own needs and the types and levels of support they receive. It also refers to pupils being encouraged to enter into a partnership with the school in a move towards developing agreed goals. This again highlights the need for the school and the pupil to have a shared understanding of any leaning difficulties or barriers to participation.

Phinn (1987) extends the idea of the 'experience of learning' and believes that in order to understand the difficulty that pupils encounter in school it is essential to attempt to see the experience from their point of view. It may then be possible to reduce the gap between the pupil's understanding of the formal and hidden curriculum and how it is presented from the viewpoint of the school. This should involve examining a variety of social and academic situations that the pupil experiences with an understanding that there may be specific differences between them. That is, pupils could be 'good at/happy in' certain areas whilst being 'poor at/unhappy in' others etc.

The data collection process in this study has elicited a range of bipolar constructs (Kelly, 1955) from the pupils as an aid to understanding them and their educational experiences. That is, there may be specific differences as to how individuals see themselves in terms of for example being a successful or unsuccessful learner. Phinn (1987) in exploring pupils' perspectives of themselves as learners specifically refers to the benefits of valuing and building on the work that pupils produce, rather than measuring them against an artificial standard.

Seeking children's views therefore is central to this study. There are legal, moral and practical reasons for consulting pupils about their understandings of their learning experiences.

The Shift towards Valuing Children as Individuals.

Hazel (1995) feels that research on the lives of children has traditionally neglected the views and voices of the young people themselves, believing the reason for this is grounded in the social and legal concerns of the researchers. Their studies have tended to have been about the 'care' and education of the children, rather than directly involving them in active participation during fieldwork. There has been a tendency to treat children as passive subjects whose opinions are peripheral to the understanding of the issues which fundamentally affect them. His work may have highlighted a gap in research, but there is growing evidence that researchers have moved in the direction of working 'with' children rather than 'on' or 'for' them. Burden (1996) and Alderson (1995) both draw upon a range of literature which emphasises the rights of the child to work in partnership with researchers, sometimes to the extent that they are directly involved in the design of the research and development of the research questions.

Gersch (1996) argues that the main reasons for increasing the active participation of children in their own assessments are on pragmatic, moral and legal grounds. He considers that this process can also lead to developing pupils' self confidence and to provide both helpful evaluations and useful feedback to teachers and assessors. The revised draft Code of Practice (DfEE, 2000a) also states that pupils who play an active part in assessment and developing and monitoring agreed targets will also have greater self esteem and feel confident that they are making progress.

Gersch et al (1996) dismisses a range of counter views to involving children in their own assessment. They feel that a wide range of pupils can be involved in assessment, and can be constructive and helpful and that they value the idea of being involved. They regard children as capable of

reliably reporting their views with credibility whilst retaining a balanced understanding that they are still in the process of growing, developing and learning. They advocate using non directive methods within Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955) and are keen to seek pupils' views through eliciting their distinct way of viewing their own particular world.

This raises the issue of children being reliable witnesses and reporters of their own feelings and thoughts. Alderson (1995) in discussing the ethics of working with young children considers that they can be competent and have a sophisticated understanding of human relationships. Ireland and Holloway (1996) support this view and see children aged nine, ten and eleven as reliable historians of their own conditions and situations. They consider that in Piagetian terms (Piaget and Inhelder, 1966) they will have reached the concrete operational stage of cognitive development and are capable of reliably reporting back. The work of Donaldson (1978) and Dunn (1988) showed however that young children are even more capable of sophisticated thought in both academic and social situations than was previously accepted.

Nevertheless the draft revised Code of Practice (DfEE, 2000a) with reference to the Children Act (Department of Health, 1989) reminds us that there is a fine balance between giving the child a voice and encouraging them to make informed decisions and overburdening them with decision making procedures where they have insufficient experience and knowledge to make appropriate judgements.

Gersch (1996) quotes the Code of Practice page 14, Department for Education (1994) which refers to the importance and significance of involving children in assessment and intervention. It states,

“every effort should be made to identify the ascertainable views and wishes of the child or young person about his or her current and future education.”

The draft revised code is (DfEE, 2000a) contains a full section on pupil participation. It emphasises that pupils should be involved in decision making right from the start and encouraged to participate at levels which reflect their evolving maturity. Participation is seen as a process that gives all children the opportunity to make choices and to understand that their view matters.

Roller (1998) supports the move towards greater participation by children in their own education and advocates a number of reasons for justifying listening to children. These include the following,

- * To reduce the mismatch in perception between adults and children. That is the child's views do not always match that of the involved adults.
- * Pupils actually state a preference for being involved.
- * Pupils have a greater feeling of involvement and responsibility which can lead to empowerment and increased self advocacy.
- * There is greater potential for change if pupils have autonomy within assessment processes.

Roller (1998) expands on the 'mismatch' between pupils and adults perceptions when she discusses the work of Ravenette (1977). She supports his view that pupils have unique understandings of their experiences and that this in itself is a legitimate and practical argument for listening to children. Understanding cannot take place without ascertaining and listening to each individual's perspective.

Davie (1993) sets this discussion within an educational feedback model which he considers is implicit in much learning and teaching. Here an interactive process occurs which relies upon participants conveying to each other their responses to the preceding events in a continuous cycle of reaction and counter reaction. He comments however that feedback in school contexts often tends to be in terms of a linear approach to learning, where information received leads to understanding achieved or skills acquired. An element which is often typically missing however is any

experience or overt evaluation by pupils of their interest in what is being taught, of its perceived relevance to them or of how they feel about the subject matter and the learning situation.

Asking children directly about their experiences may not sit comfortably with some teachers who feel that the pupil can become too empowered with choice and that value judgements may not be soundly based. There would also be a need for some schools to create a culture of 'asking' rather than 'telling' with the subsequent development of systems which value pupils' views and opinions without creating forums for criticism and blame.

Davie (1989) in an earlier work emphasised the need for schools to find a variety of ways of listening to and heeding the views of pupils in relation to the school's procedures, policies and curricula. He comments that experienced teachers are often astonished at pupils' honesty, good sense and perception when they are consulted about their own schooling in a constructive way. The work of Alderson (1995) again supports this view of children as reliable reporters of their own experiences.

Mortimer (1996) feels that the issue of listening to children inevitable encompasses its opposite but complimentary side. That is, enabling the pupils to talk or give 'voice' to their feelings and opinions. She emphasises the need to consider what approaches to assessment and intervention are appropriate to a developmentally young child whilst still maintaining the principles of the Code of Practice (1994). She considers it is important to explore and establish what young children are thinking and feeling about their educational experiences and that some approaches may need to be less direct than just asking them. Replies may be shaded by the following,

- * what they feel we wish to know.
- * who is listening.
- * what they understand the purpose of the situation to be.
- * what they feel able to contribute.

Mortimer (1996) continues that researchers do have a valid starting point for asking children what they feel about their individual education plans, whether they feel compatible with it and how they would like to contribute to it. She lists a variety of ways in which young children can be asked and these include the following,

- * observation and interpretation.
- * play with models.
- * story time.
- * talk through approaches.
- * children's drawings.

This multi sensory approach to working with children is reinforced in the draft Code of Practice (DfEE, 2000a) which considers that consulting with young children will necessitate using a range of communication strategies such as play, art, video and verbal communication.

The method of 'asking' children for their opinions and views through the medium of their drawings is central to the thesis of this study. Mortimer (1996) expands on this method and considers that children's drawings have been used extensively in assessing and working with children in a variety of ways and for a range of purposes such as the following,

- * Developmental levels of children's abilities - (Selfe 1977).
- * Emotional states - (Dalton 1989).
- * Personal experiences - (Bacon 1991).

Mortimer (1996) considers that drawings can form an important part of the dialogue through which we are able to share experiences with pupils and that they can be springboards for further talking and thinking. She states on page 44 ,

"We can use drawings and illustrations as a stimulus for children's own comments and interpretations. This, too, will give us a glimpse of the way they understand their worlds".

She concludes that as well as involving children in the process of their own assessments researchers can also make their own assessment tools which should be as pleasurable and as positive as possible for the child. Any assessment should arise naturally from a familiar situation in which the child is able to show of their best as well as of their level of need. She considers it essential to provide not only a child centred assessment, but a child involved one also. Burden (1993) refers to the change in the practice of research from doing research 'on' and 'for' children to doing research 'with' them. There is a need therefore to develop in schools a culture and opportunity which allow children to be heard. This process can gather from children the essential and relevant information that they are in a position to share with us and at the same time empower them in the process of their own assessment.

Giving 'Voice' to the child.

Glenny (1996) documents that there has been much educational research on the organisation and architecture of schools and classrooms together with a range of arguments for and against teaching methods and resources etc. However there has been little research which consults the pupils directly about their experiences. She feels that the understanding of pupils' perspectives are of fundamental importance if schools are to meet their needs and that they should be regularly asked about their views about the choices being made for them.

Glenny (1996) feels that much research however is still embedded in a context already 'given' and remains within a strongly adult initiated and controlled frame. Pupils are often still asked about what they understand rather than what they feel, like or want to achieve. Those pupils with special educational needs have a need to communicate in greater depth and about a variety of issues that effect them. Davie et al (1996) page 4, illustrate this and quote Jackie a pupil with special needs as follows,

"we (pupils with special needs) want to let people know
what we can do with our mouths, our hands, our brains.

We want you to think about what we are saying and what we feel about things”.

Glenny (1996) considers why it might be difficult to communicate with children about their feelings and wishes. She feels that historically there have tended to be issues of power relations between professionals and the public that have left some groups without an effective voice. Pupil and in particular those with special educational needs may well fall into this category where they may need additional support, encouragement and time to ‘practice’ expressing themselves. In expressing their views they should also learn how to explain the reasons for their preferences. She discusses the concerns that some professionals may have about the capability of children to take on the responsibility of public debate, or making public their voice.

Hall (1996) comments on the debate about children being reliable as informants. He considers the power differential between the adult questioner and the child respondent which can have a significant effect upon any interaction. Furthermore inappropriate styles of questioning can lead to the suggestible responses that cast doubt on children’s evidence. This naturally brings the validity of the pupil’s responses into question, which is a central issue in this research. Davie (1996) et al also consider this matter and feel that researchers should cease blaming children for being suggestible and examine their own procedures for inappropriate and potentially misleading styles of questioning.

Glenny (1996) argues for the use of research tools which provide an appropriate mechanism for supporting investigative interactions, altering the pace of interactions and providing the structure that gives children a ‘safe’ context in which to respond. She particularly advocates the use of Personal Construct Theory (Kelly 1955) in order to create a relaxed safe atmosphere so children can express themselves reliably. She feels that this method of enquiry allows researchers to work within the child’s own system of constructing or construing the world. The researcher shows a

demonstrable interest in the child's view which can then provide the focus for further in-depth discussion and investigation rather than the traditional primary research motive usually being to prove or falsify a particular hypothesis.

Using personal construct psychology allows the researcher to have a freedom of expectation from any particular pupil response. Thus the child's perception of the audience together with any related anxieties can often evaporate, to be replaced by the more interesting concern of investigating their own thinking. Through working with children's own construing system the research questions will then be from the pupil's perspective. The researcher is then in a position to support the child in making significant connections between what they know and feel and the subject discussed. This process provides a framework which allows researchers to 'slow down' the interviewing process and in the words of Glenny (1996) to 'come along side the child'.

Davie (1996) et al set this issue of seeking pupils' views within a market economy setting, where they feel that the child in the educational system is the ultimate consumer and should therefore be listened to. As clients of special educational services the pupils are therefore a vital source of information about the nature, quality and efficiency of the services they receive. They may also hold the key to the understanding and resolution of a range of problems regarding their learning. The questionable terminology of consumer and client nevertheless helps to place pupils at the centre of the educational process.

Ross (1997) feels that crucial aspects of successfully seeking pupil views lie in the setting and the method which allows the child 'permission' to speak. She refers in particular to the method of 'speaking through drawings' and the work of Thomas and Silk (1990) where the use of drawings have successfully been used as a nonverbal method for seeking the child's views. This has been particularly useful as an alternative to verbal communication

which may be a weak ability for young children especially when asked for their feelings about issues. Ross (1997) feels that some children may also only be able to express their emotions (as well as other thoughts) through the medium of drawings and pictures. There is a note of caution in her work however in that she feels that drawings only represent part of the 'story' or picture and should not be over interpreted nor analysed without additional supporting evidence. Stories can change over time and the 'truth' may be hazy, although she does believe that under the right conditions young children will speak and portray the truth as they see it.

Russell (1995) considers the particular difficulties of obtaining the views of children with special educational needs. She feels that with school based and statutory assessment arrangements that schools, families and relevant professionals will require some radical rethinking about how they find out what pupils think and feel about assessment and any subsequent interventions from the support services. This aspect of joint multi professional assessments and interventions is again referred to in the draft code of practice (DfEE, 2000a).

C) Children's Drawings as a form of communication.

Nonverbal Communication.

Argyle (1967) has shown that nonverbal communication can sometimes have a greater impact on interactions than its verbal equivalent. He considered that there are three main functions of nonverbal communication which are as follows.

- * To communicate attitudes and emotions from one person to another.
- * It supports verbal communication.
- * As a replacement for verbal speech when it cannot be used.

Berkowitz (1975) feels that nonverbal communication consists of signals which are frequently involuntary and that individuals may not be aware of what they are communicating. The messages conveyed in nonverbal

communication may therefore be largely unintentional and unconscious. Respondents are less likely to contrive their responses to fit adult expectations and situations. It is perhaps this very quality that encourages some people to place more trust in it than in verbal communication.

Kelly (1986) considers that there are a range of nonverbal communications, but emphasises the importance of one which leaves a permanent record, that is in the form of drawings. He considers that since the first written language systems that drawings have been used as a form of communication in the form of pictographs and ideographs (the visual symbol relates directly to an idea). He believes that drawings can truly be considered a reliable form of nonverbal communication.

Fury et al (1997) argue that the nonverbal nature of drawings may free children to express emotions and attitudes that are otherwise difficult to assess. They advocate both the projective use of drawings through case study interpretations and also as a valuable means of assessing children's attitudes, needs and conflicts. They refer to the work of Koppitz (1968) who considered their usefulness to be especially important during middle childhood. That is, that drawings are a natural mode of expression for children aged five to eleven. Koppitz (1968) considered that long before youngsters can put their feelings and thoughts into words, they are able to express both conscious and unconscious attitudes, wishes and concerns in their drawings. Fury et al (1997) are therefore strong advocates for accepting drawings as a legitimate form of nonverbal communication.

Kelly (1986) concludes that despite criticisms, evidence would seem to suggest that children's drawings can indeed be considered to be a legitimate and reliable form of nonverbal communication as defined by Argyle (1967) and Fury et al (1997). They can for example communicate attitudes and emotions (Di Leo 1970 and 1983) and support verbal communication when this is restricted or limited in the pupil (Dalton 1996). Children's drawings

can also as described in the work of Ravenette (1997) tap aspects of the unconscious mind to reveal certain aspects of feelings and personality.

Messages from the unconscious.

Furth (1988) explores this aspect of drawings revealing the unconscious in some depth when he considers that drawings can reveal 'hidden secrets' about the individual's feelings, attitudes and emotions. He sees the interpretation of any drawing or art work lies central to the ideas generalised in the work of Carl Jung. Jung (as cited in Furth 1988) considered that the realm of the unconscious can be represented in art through images or symbols and that these expressions come from the creative side of the human being. This aspect considers that drawings in the form of symbols have a significance and importance in that they represent thoughts and feelings in the unconscious. Raising thoughts from the unconscious into the conscious is considered an aspect of Personal Construct psychology.

Tamm (1996) supports this view that drawings can be the products or manifestations of the symbolising power of the human psyche or unconscious. The creation of pictures is seen as one of the first expressions of the child's creative power and their content consists of two kinds of symbols. The external symbols which are culturally formed and the internal symbols which are original signals from the collective unconscious. Tamm (1996) feels that it is important to distinguish between whether a child's expression is used in a concrete, anthropomorphic way and when it is used as a metaphor. Some understandings and experiences are considered to remain at a deeply psychological level which cannot be matched with the use of words. The individual may find difficulty expressing his or her innermost experiences verbally and must employ symbols, images and metaphors. Tamm's analysis uses the method of 'phenomenography' which emphasises the understanding of phenomena in the world around us. This method focuses on the qualitative or thematic content of perceptions.

This potential for consciousness is what makes human beings different from animals, for with this potential we can understand ourselves, even at the deepest levels, and make conscious decisions about our actions and the direction of our lives. Furth (1988) continues to explore this theme that in order to know ourselves we need to bring into consciousness that which is submerged in our unconscious. Also that these unconscious thoughts can come to us in the symbolic language of dreams, paintings and drawings. He advocates a systematic analysis of drawings to aid our understanding and awareness of the messages from the unconscious.

This research has focussed on the drawings that children produce and how the interpretations of these pictures in conjunction with personal construct learning conversations can add to and inform our understanding of their perspectives of their educational experiences. This includes the formal taught curriculum and the informal hidden curriculum and therefore defines all the educational experiences the child as a pupil has. This definition may help to understand that children have a broad range and depth of educational experiences which they perceive as important to them at a personal level.

Drawings within an educational perspective.

Children's drawings have been used by professionals in a variety of ways to help them understand the affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects of children's development. Griffiths (1945) considers that the act of drawing by young children is a common occurrence in most cultures. Cultural differences do occur however in how children make visual representations as shown by comparisons between Scottish and Australian Aborigine children (The Open University, 1986 Course E206). Griffiths (1945) sees drawings as valuable evidence of the working of the child's mind and as an insight into their imagination. She also feels that they can be considered to be examples of the emotional characteristics and feelings of the child.

Jacqueline Goodnow (1977) has highlighted the following reasons why children's drawings are worthy of interest. They can be,

- * Intrinsically charming, playful and fresh.
- * Indications of more general phenomena of human life.

Goodnow considers the latter point to refer to an expression of the child's search for order in a more complex world. She concludes that they can be examples of nonverbal communication, indices of the type of society in which the children live, signs of intellectual development and reminders of lost innocence and verve.

There is still a debate amongst educationalists about the importance attached to children's drawings, although they have been considered as follows.

- * As indicators of the stages of development. Luquet (1913) considered there were specific characteristics of representation that were common to a given age band and that children develop through these stages.
- * As indicators of problem solving ability. Freeman (1980) sees the skills of drawing as a problem solving exercise. These are related to the growth of children's competence in other areas such as language and spatial awareness.
- * As a measure of intelligence. Goodenough (1926) and Harris (1963) consider that drawings can be used as an index of the growing complexity of children's general conceptual ability. Both these authors have used the drawings of a human figure as a measure of individual intelligence.
- * As expressions of emotions and personality. Goodnow (1977) encouraged certain psychologists to see drawings as an outward expression of inner thoughts and feelings and as a way of expressing unconscious feelings. She felt that young children who may be unable to verbalise their feelings may be better able to express their anger, fear, anxiety etc through drawings and paintings (ie nonverbally).

This overview of the use of children's drawings in understanding their development is important in a general sense. The emphasis of this research however is to use drawings to help understand how children feel about their educational experiences. Sandow (1997) uses drawings to explore a variety of children's feelings and perceptions. She considers that to explore children's constructs [ie how they make sense of the world - Kelly (1955) Personal Construct Theory] through drawings is a speedy, accessible and popular method which allows the researcher to go beyond the often limited mode of verbal expression. This theme of exploring the pupil view through using the process of personal construct theory is further developed in the work of Ravenette (1988b) and Beaver (1996).

Allied to these views is the idea that drawings are in a sense the 'tip of the iceberg' when exploring peoples constructs and that they can be natural rather than imitative, ie they spring from within. This is particularly seen in the work of Furth (1988) who considers that an examination of children's drawings can give a better understanding of their cognitive and emotional development. Koppitz (1968) in particular has explored drawings in relation to emotional development and understanding. There has also been considerable development in the field of Art Therapy in the way in which drawings can help to give a 'window on the mind'.

The use of drawings as projective measures of emotional states gained popularity in the 1970's. This followed the definitive work by Koppitz (1968) who used the technique of asking children to draw a human figure (Human Figure Drawing - HFD) in order to reflect both the children's current stage of mental development and their attitude and concerns of the given moment. The HFD being seen as a portrait of the inner child of the moment. The style of the drawings reflects the feelings and thoughts which are most important to the child at the time. That style being seen as peculiar to that particular child.

Koppitz (1968) distinguishes clearly between psychologists who seek to explore children's drawings as measures of their developmental stage and those who see them as a rich source of descriptive information which can help to explore interpersonal attitudes. This latter approach of using drawings as sources of information and as an aid to personal construct discussions is taken in this study. Children's drawings are seen as a natural and acceptable means of helping children to express themselves. They can be a rich source of information about children and their experiences.

D) Personal Construct Psychology.

Introduction.

During this study I have been able to develop my thinking and understanding regarding the use of Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) in relation to exploring pupils' views.

Initially the literature review developed during Year 1 referred to the work of Kelly (1955) and Ravenette (1988b) as a theoretical support to my understanding of gaining pupils' views. As this study has progressed my understanding of Kelly through reading Fransella and Dalton (1990) and further reading of Ravenette (1997) grew and allowed me to appreciate the use of children's drawings as both a process and a product for exploring their views.

Kelly (1955) developed the Personal Construct Theory and considered that people act as 'scientists' in order to formulate theories and hypotheses about what their world is like. He believed that people behave in a way which allows them to build up a model of their world in order to predict events. The essence of Kelly's approach is that the ideas, thoughts and theories we have about reality arise out of our experience in the world. The unique model we form of the world relatively quickly becomes an idiosyncratic framework which we use to interpret further experiences. The specific hypotheses we have at a given time about the world are called

personal constructs and the framework which acts as a model of the world is called a construct system.

The Philosophy of Constructive Alternativism.

Epistemological Roots.

Two fundamental principles form the philosophical roots of PCP.

The first is that of Constructive Alternativism which states that there are alternative ways of construing, that is trying to make sense of the world around us. Whatever view of things might currently be held it is always possible to construct an alternative. We are all, in our own unique manner, attempting to anticipate and thus predict events in our environment and we revise our predictions in the light of our experiences. Our present perceptions are open to question and reconsideration, obvious occurrences may become transformed if we are inventive enough to construe them differently. Equally valid alternative constructs are always possible.

This position supports the view that there is no objective reality or absolute truth to discover. Everything we perceive in life is open to as many interpretations as we are able to devise. Each individual constructs the universe (events) in a very personal way. It is the awareness that alternative views can be constructed that leads to the hope and expectation for changes in behaviour since alternative views offer the prospect of alternative actions. Kelly (1955) considers that all behaviour is seen as a form of communication and therefore as an experiment as the individual attempts to make sense of their world and add meaning to it.

The second principle rests on the belief that all knowing stems from the awareness of differences, and by implication, its complimentary sameness. A difference is known by the impact it makes and the awareness is in the perceiver and therefore personal to him/her. For Kelly (1955), this principle leads to the formation of the 'construct' as the central concept of the theory.

The Theory of Personal Constructs.

Kelly (1955) considered that personal construct psychology is both an approach and a theory. A constructivist approach considers that objective reality is a myth and that our subjective reality is based on the meanings we have attached to previous experiences. It is the meaning that is influential and not the event itself. This is a relatively content free point of view about how best to proceed in studying people. Personal meanings are the basis of our individual theories or frameworks through which we filter and interpret current experience. An individual is constantly engaged in the psychological processing of purposefully searching for meaning with constantly applying our personal theories to what is going on. Shifting and restructuring occurs in line with new understandings.

The theory takes the stance that people are active participants in their own ventures and not passive recipients of external stimuli. This is seen in Kelly's terminology of 'man the scientist'. They shape and reshape their understanding of events and in the process each person creates their own experiential worlds where events are only knowable through the construction that individuals place upon them. The world in this sense includes both the phenomena in the outside world and the thoughts, emotions and sensations that comprise their inner world. If we are to understand a person we must understand both the constructions of their world and the underlying basis for those constructions.

Personal Construct Theory is a development of constructive alternativism and does so through a key statement and eleven subsidiary statements. It is a formal theory which is reflexive in nature, ie the theory being one persons thoughts and is subject to its own rules. This includes seeing the theory as a construction of the world, but allowing for the fact that in time, when aspects of our theory are invalidated, then alternative constructions may take place. The principle of constructivism focuses on the promotion of a person's (child's) ability to generate a meaningful understanding of the world in which they live and to acknowledge the continuous process of

development and change. There is also an emphasis on the importance of self-agency in human action.

The theory proposes that people are pro-active in making sense of the world in which they live. Individuals construct meaning from their experiences and therefore an individual's particular way of making sense of the world will be personal to them. The basic component of the individual's system of making sense of the world is the 'construct'. This is a bi-polar dimension which provides a meaningful discrimination based on the individual's experience. The construct is based upon some entity and its opposite or difference; thus there is a discrimination of similarity and difference and one cannot exist without the other.

The Construct System.

A construct is the basic unit of an individual's construct system and provides each of us with a personal reality constructed by and for ourselves. A construct has two poles or ends and are contrasts and not necessarily opposites. It is a form of discrimination between elements. An element cannot be one characteristic without not being another. It is an organised system of bi-polar constructs developed over a lifetime through which we 'gaze' at our personal world. It gives our experiences personal meaning. The construct system gradually evolves as we develop in early social interaction with others. It has a hierarchical nature and governs both the way we see the world and the way we act.

The construct is an abstraction which arises from an awareness of a similarity and a contrast between events and is therefore bi-polar. This awareness will have cognitive, affective and conative aspects and arises out of an individual's personal experience and is therefore their own. The construct provides an axis for discriminating between events, has predictive properties and provides an underlying basis for a person to make sense of themselves and their circumstances.

Construing is the term used to describe the process of predicting and thereby making sense of our personal world. This operates at a range of levels of awareness (what we think, how we think and what we experience), but is essentially individual and personal. Both similarity and contrast are essential to the meaning we give to events. For example to understand the element 'good learners' as 'people who listen' (see Sarah Appendix 2 page 43) we must have a view of the contrast which for Sarah is 'people who don't learn very well and mess around in class'. It is very often with the contrast that the truly personal meaning of construing becomes evident.

Bannister, P. et al (1995) in discussing Kelly's work, considers that construing is experienced at all levels of awareness. That is, thoughts (cognition), feelings (affect) and actions (behaviour) all contribute towards developing personal harmony. There is a dynamic search by individuals for personal understanding which according to Kelly (1955) is gained by recognising similarities and differences in our experiences. The personal constructs in Kelly's theory are formulated as pairs of opposing concepts which we apply to the world of objects and people around us. Our personal frameworks or construct systems are therefore highly individual and personally understood.

When working with children, PCP researchers take an interest in and pay particular attention to the constructs individual children use as they structure the way they tackle their difficulties. Researchers can help to elaborate participants understandings and revise their approaches whilst accepting and working within their belief system.

The Application of the Theory of Personal Construct Psychology.

Children as particular cases.

PCP theory can be explored through various techniques, and in particular within this research through the child related techniques of Ravenette (1985).

There is currently a repositioning of the status of children's generative contribution to their own development. (See The Children's Act 1987), the revised Code of Practice 2000 and the Index for Inclusion 2000). The qualitative researcher seeks to discover the meanings that participants attach to their behaviour, how they interpret situations and what their perspectives are on particular issues. Pupils may have an understanding of the school situation which is very different from teachers. They may not see it as 'a place of learning', but as an 'arena for socialising' for which learning is counter productive (Hammersley et al 1994). The perceptions of children will determine their responses to school and to which school will have to respond if any changes are to take place. An enquiry into children's views and the meanings they attach to their experiences should therefore be central to any educational activity.

Children represent a unique position when eliciting constructs. There is a need to focus on how they generate their own reactions to life events. There are practical implications for the researcher or 'questioner' where there is a need to develop inductive styles of operating and to develop a wide range of related supporting materials and techniques. This can lead to more sensitive appraisals of children's circumstances.

Within PCP research with children there is an appreciation that the developing child's cognition is a function of contexts and the child's knowledge structures (Johnson, B 1996). Here there is an emphasis on an ecological view of contextual factors that place the individual in physical and social realities and the child is seen as a reciprocal influence in the system that affects their development. It is important therefore to study children in context since contexts are in turn influenced and shaped by the presence of individuals. Children and their contexts mutually constitute each other. It follows therefore that assessment and research should take place within the child's personal environments, such as the school.

Children may find some school situations uncomfortable or threatening and are constantly challenged to develop competence over situations over which they have very little control. Children are often placed into contexts over which they have very little control, where adults make most decisions for them, eg school. They are rarely given private places to work or play and this is even more so in schools. They are not powerless however and are capable of creating their own sub-contexts within the adult created contexts, which often remain invisible to adults, but are visible and salient to children. Young children are however context dependent and context vulnerable. It is important therefore to take seriously the issue of context and therefore how young children make sense of their educational world.

As researchers, our access to children will always be mediated through multiple layers of experience, both theirs and ours. To look through the 'lens' of PCP theory is to see the child as an active constructor of experience who makes individual sense of their world through a series of experiments as they communicate through their behaviour. 'Reality' is interpreted more as transforming and shifting occurrences to which the individuals' constructions enable only indirect, mediated and partial access. The focus is on the mediated, contextual and transactional nature of the relationship between the child and their world.

Graue and Walsh (1998) consider that children often know more than they 'know they know' and they surely know more about what they know than the researcher does. The purpose of researching with them and interviewing them is to encourage them to talk about what they know. They may not have had much experience conversing with adults and their experiences may have been very ritualised (eg, teacher directed classroom questioning and answering etc) and they may come to expect that when adults ask them questions either the adult already knows the answer or that they may be in trouble. Few children may have had the experience of talking to an adult who wants them (the children) to teach him/her (the adult) about their lives.

Having conversations with children therefore within a PCP framework (which asks them to explore their own understandings of themselves and their interactions) can support the research questions which seek to explore pupil perspectives of their learning experiences. The emphasis on the child's construction allows a focus on how children generate their own reactions to life events. The researcher aims to help the child have insight into both poles of their constructs and to the relationship between constructs within the system thereby helping to understand their own personal world views.

Construct development in children.

Kelly (1955) views the development of constructs in children occurs in the following sequence. The earliest constructs are states of the organism which later become people who are important to the child. Development continues and representation is in the form of verbal symbols. Ravenette (1977) considers that children's constructs also develop through a phase where their actions and the actions of others also provides a powerful basis for their expectations.

There are however differences between adults and children in using personal construct psychology and eliciting constructs which are as follows.

- * Children are in transition, in developmental stages where they have yet to develop a base of reasonable stable expectations and anticipations upon which psychological change can take place. This stable base is in the process of being developed.
- * Within this developing base the verbal representation of these anticipations is likely unstable and ephemeral. It is part of the growth process that the child is able to make progressively finer levels of discrimination and to develop a greater hierarchy of abstractions. This leads over time to richer and more complex construct systems.

The elicitation of children's constructs is therefore complex. The constructs which are important behaviourally may be just those which defy easy verbalisation and which in fact exist at a rather low level of awareness.

Kelly (1955) considers that to a certain extent we share similar constructs and construct systems and we are able therefore to share with another person in their model of the world. This is particularly important when building rapport with individuals. Interactions are frequently about one person trying to understand how the other is perceiving the world, particularly as this understanding forms the basis for predicting their behaviour

Working with Children.

Kelly (1955) considered that psychologists should become involved in the life situations of the people they have chosen to study. Ravenette (1985) has been particularly prominent as a practising educational psychologist in using the personal construct theory of Kelly (1955) with children in school. He considers that alternative views are always possible and therefore they offer the prospect of alternative actions and the possibility of change. He considers that all knowing stems from an awareness of differences and by implication its complementary sameness where this awareness is in the perceiver and is therefore personal to him.

Ravenette (1985) states that the construct is an abstraction which arises from an awareness of a similarity and a contrast between events and is therefore bipolar. This awareness will have cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects. He considers the following points are important in understanding personal construct theory. The construct,

- * Arises out of an individual's personal experience and is therefore their own.
- * Provides an axis for discrimination between events.
- * Has predictive properties.

- * Provides an underlying basis for a person to make sense of themselves and their circumstances.
- * The abstraction can be given verbal markers,
 - to identify the two ends,
 - for distinguishing one construct from another,
 - for communication.
- * If a person takes another person's verbal marker as a basis for a construct then they will invest in it with his own personal meaning.
- * A person's system of constructs provides the underlying basis whereby they construct their map of 'reality'. The system is not however, the 'map' nor the 'reality'. The construct therefore operates at a low level of awareness and is not directly observable.

Ravenette (1985) considers that the principle of constructive alternativism has implications for action and that the principle of the construct has implications for investigation. He states that 'we do not know the meaning of a statement unless we also know what it implies, what it denies and the context within which it is useful'. This position therefore provides a theoretical basis for investigative interviewing. In pursuing the answer to these three separate questions we elicit from the pupil their underlying basis for making sense and help them to reflect on their own understanding.

People are seen as active participants in their own ventures and not passive recipients of external stimuli. They are continually shaping and reshaping their understanding of events and creating their own experiential world. This world includes both phenomena in the outside world and the thoughts, emotions and sensations which comprise the phenomena of the individual's inner world.

Ravenette (1977) also takes this position when working with children as follows, 'If our aim is to understand someone, then we must gain understanding from within that person, empathise with them, get to know their story and explore their social world through their frameworks'. Both

researcher and participants become involved in interacting and construing. The richness and relevance of the personal experience of all is acknowledged and validated. Kelly (1955) considers that this understanding helps to democratise the process of research. The subjectivity of both the researcher and researched is embraced. People are seen as complex beings rather than reduced to isolated variables. The participants' constructions are therefore valued.

Ravenette (1977) considers that the basic tool of the researcher is the question and the aim should be to ask better and better questions which are more facilitative for the child and more penetrating for the interviewer. Ravenette (1977) supports the use of children's drawings to allow the child's own constructions of their world to be investigated. The drawings can become the elements and the descriptions of the elements can provide a knowledge of the child's store of words whereby he discriminates between himself and his peer group. There should be an attempt to give the child scope to provide their own observations (eg on their drawings) and to make sense by allowing the child to describe what was happening in the different situations in their own pictures.

The investigation becomes a process for eliciting constructs and the children become involved directly in the process of a joint investigation between researcher and child. To invite the child to contribute encourages spontaneous involvement and entrusts them to make their own choices about what is important to them. To help them to communicate about themselves.

Working with children can have particular requirements. Eliciting constructs from them involves inviting them to do something they have never done before. That is, finding expressions for abstractions which they had never before verbalised or they had to generate abstractions where previously their experiences, thoughts and feelings had been fluid.

In this research I am interested in how the pupils have made sense of their school experiences. To understand the children better by encouraging them to talk about themselves. They talked of what they saw, what they did, what they felt, what they said and what other people said. The prime function of the interview techniques is that they make it easier for a child to respond. Children may not present themselves as having an issue or 'a problem' for discussion for which they require help and may even see the interview as irrelevant.

Children therefore (more than adults) need to know what is the purpose of the conversation (the purpose of the researcher's questions) then they will have the freedom within the framework to communicate their understanding of themselves and others. There is an attempt to get to know someone well and to enquire into an area in which the child is the expert. That is, the child as pupil in relation to school.

So there is a need therefore to gain the confidence of the child, to ask questions in a systematic way and to enquire into areas in which the child feels safe in their own expertise. The research aims to try to find out how a child makes sense of themselves and the people in their world and the interrelationships. To arrive at a child's constructs through inference in a shared activity exploring those aspects of a child's perceptions and awareness which they take for granted, that part which operates at a lower level of awareness (raising from the unconsciousness to the consciousness).

Ravenette (1977) calls this an exploration of ordinariness, since it is in the everyday experiences that we seek a child's construct system, not in fantasy nor in dramatic incidents. To talk about the ordinary and that part of oneself that we take for granted is not easy. Ravenette considers that we invite children to talk about themselves and their experiences then we are exploring their unverballed expectations of life. Their experiences are a rich source of enquiry.

In this research therefore the following points are important,

- * The child's imagination is turned to the reconstruction of ordinary things rather than to the creation of 'fantasy' stories.
- * The investigations take the form of an active dialogue, not only in setting the structure, but in collaboratively clarifying the meaning of the child's responses.
- * We invite the child to be an observer and reporter of incidents which they share and also to take some responsibility in imagination for their own development in school.
- * At the interpretive level a premium is put on the mapping of conscious awareness, rather than the deliberate exploration of lower levels of awareness.

This style of PCP interview invites the child to think seriously about themselves and their way for generating change. Also to look at how they relate to the people with whom they are interacting or who presents a problem to them. A personal construct approach to interviewing children should by definition lead to the finding of their constructions whereby the child makes sense of himself and others.

Practical Implications of PCP theory.

- * The theory applies to educationalists and researchers etc as well as children. It can serve as a refreshing useful theory base from which to turn around and reappraise some of my work demands and tasks.
- * Within educational psychology it allows educationalists to study the implications in relation to change processes with children and others.
- * It allows the reader to engage in an analysis of the 'role of self' in work settings. That is, how do others construe me and how do I construe their constructions.

- * It recognises the role of the practitioner to the child and the complex psychological environment in which one person's reality interacts with another persons.
- * It has practical application from a sound theory base and is therefore valuable to educators working in schools.
- * It supports a one to one working relationship where things can be looked at from the perspective of the individual.
- * The 'therapeutic' contact is with the individual, whilst the intervention (feedback to the school / action) has a more systemic feel to it.

Personal Construct Psychology Techniques.

Introduction.

In this study I have been guided by the work and techniques of Ravenette (1988a) and Landfield (1971). Ravenette (1980a) uses 'a drawing and its opposite' as a technique to elicit constructs with children. This has been developed further as a triadic sort technique in the work of Beaver (1996) who suggested it can be used with more than two drawings. The Landfield (1971) pyramiding technique allows a greater understanding of how individuals both perceive themselves and others by using conversations as an aid to characterisation. I have applied these techniques in this study by collecting a series of drawings from the pupils and using them in conversations with them.

PCP and asking Children to Draw.

Ravenette (1980a) uses the particular technique of 'a drawing and its opposite' in his work with children in order to explore the ways in which they make sense of themselves and their circumstances. He feels that a verbally structured interview finds out a great deal, but does not give access to areas of experiencing that are inaccessible by verbal means. He considers that a child's drawings will point to aspects of knowing which

exist at lower levels of awareness than that of verbal articulation and that this can therefore be a justification for asking them to draw.

His technique of asking children to produce two drawings (Ravenette 1980a) develops a polarity of thinking which allows for a greater understanding of the child's meaning. To produce a 'drawing and its opposite' will give some idea of the child's underlying interests and concerns. This process of using polarity helps to transcend a single or original drawing and can point to possible concerns in relation to the child's experience of himself and his circumstances. To ask for a contrast to a given meaning is seen as inviting the person to clarify that meaning both for themselves and for ourselves as researchers. Ravenette (1988a) refers to Kelly (1955) where he considers the essence of construct theory being its bipolarity. A statement made by the child needs to be seen in the context of its opposite and thereby it takes on a more precise meaning with what it both affirms and denies. When the contrast is personal rather than logical it conveys something of the individuality of the child.

Ravenette (1980a) emphasises that the drawings should not be analysed in isolation, but in relation to the situation and context of the child's own experience. This can help to give the child a legitimate and honest voice regarding their thoughts, feelings and actions in relation to their experiences. He feels that this process is not searching for a 'truth' of an interpretation, but for the value of an interpretation. That is, the extent to which it can clarify an individual's dilemma or promote the individual's psychological growth. Ravenette (1980a) articulates the view that the interviewer should make it clear to the child that this process may well tell them something about themselves which they were previously unaware of or had not thought of before. The assessment can be seen therefore as both a therapeutic and information gathering process.

Beaver (1996) comments on the work of Ravenette and his particular technique of asking children to draw. He considers that it is a process

which can be used to explore with the child their model of the world beyond the superficial level and to provide a basis for interpretive hypotheses. In PCP terms it is a vehicle for exploring similarities and differences through themes which are represented in both pictures or noticeably absent from the pictures. That is, what the pictures imply and also what they deny.

Dalton (1996) also expands on the work of Ravenette in relation to personal construct theory. She draws particularly on the way in which Ravenette explores the elicitation of constructs in a nonverbal way. These may be at a level which young people find difficult or impossible to articulate. In particular his work in using children's drawings is considered to be a way of knowing which exists at a different or lower level of awareness than that of verbal articulation.

Ravenette (1977) emphasised the importance of the child's interpretation of visual meaning and to avoid imposing the researcher's own interpretation on the material and the process. He considered that this technique ('a drawing and it's opposite', Ravenette 1980) can help to gain some idea of how a child actually perceives situations in school and how they understand some of the interactions that take place there. This process can be an insight into the extent of their understanding of different ways of coping and thereby be of benefit to the pupil, their teachers and the school. He extends his work by using the pictures in his interactions and interviews for reconstructing and helping the child to find alternatives to ways of coping which may currently be proving ineffective. This in turn can lead to empowerment for the child and a realisation that change or other ways of doing things are possible.

Dalton (1996) concludes her thoughts on Ravenette's work by stating that understanding the construing of children is an essential pre cursor to any kind of psychological intervention with them. There must be a serious attempt to suspend our own construing and to 'see' through their eyes.

Bannister, P. et al (1995) also supports the use of drawings as a technique for exploring children's constructs, particularly when it is used in conjunction with other methods. They consider that drawings can allow an initial freeing from language, can give rise to more spontaneous expression and illuminate perhaps more readily the personal quality of the experience that language often fails to convey. Drawings can be used in a multitude of effective ways. For example to illuminate parts of an interview, to chart change (real or potential), to go beyond the words and to reveal more of the underlying meaning. There are clear links to art therapy approaches where drawing skills are not necessary in order to represent feelings and understandings.

Bannister emphasises the importance of there being a cooperative analysis between participant and researcher which includes the nonverbal characteristics of the illustration. The researcher's understanding being best checked out by using propositional statements so that it is the participant's interpretation rather than the researcher's that is illuminated. This will help to gain an understanding of the participant's way of seeing and to try to enter their reality. It is accepted however that a complete understanding ('as if' we were they) is not possible. We cannot totally experience their world as we come with our own values and understandings to the research process.

The Triadic Sort Technique.

The Triadic sort technique as described by Fransella and Dalton (1990) is a method of elicit constructs from pupils by asking them to identify similarities and differences between various 'elements' of their experiences. These elements can be anything which makes sense to the client such as objects, feelings, descriptions etc. In year 1 of the study I supplied the elements of being 'Happy' and 'Unhappy' in school for groups of children whilst in year 2/ 3 the individual pupils had the freedom to choose their own situations and feelings attached to their drawing.

In this study the three initial drawings produced by the pupils were taken as the elements for comparison. These were the original drawing of the self in school followed by a drawing of the opposite of the first picture and then finally a third drawing which was independent of the other two. These pictures were then arranged in front of the pupil and they were asked which two elements were similar in some respect and how the third element contrasted with the other two. There is a search for the personal characteristics in the drawings rather than the physical features or appearances. This allows for a pole to emerge (the emergent pole) from the similarities and an opposite or contrast pole to emerge from the contrasting third element.

The Landfield (1971) Pyramid Technique.

a) What is it and which paradigm does it derive from.

The Landfield (1971) pyramiding technique is a procedure developed and used within the personal construct psychology framework which aims to explore the subject's ways of construing their world. Kelly (1955) describes several ways of eliciting constructs from people and these have been developed by such people as Landfield (1971). Constructs are considered to be theoretically organised into a system and so have links with each other. It is possible to follow through this network both to more and more concrete constructs as in 'pyramiding' as well as to abstract constructs through 'laddering'.

Pyramiding is a particular style of interviewing which allows constructs to be revealed which frame the individual's reality and are central to their being. This procedure helps to illuminate how constructs are personally and hierarchically integrated and has the advantage of being able to identify which of the revealed constructs is more important, thus offering a better understanding of how a person frames their reality.

Banister (1994) considered that with young children core constructs may be difficult to verbalise for a variety of reasons and the subordinate more

concrete constructs of an individual may be more usefully explored therefore through pyramiding.

b) How the technique is applied.

The pyramiding technique was developed by Landfield (1971) in order to find out from individuals the ways in which they see other people and by inference or more directly see themselves. In describing others we demonstrate our understanding of what persons are like to themselves and also the extent to which we identify with others or the opposite (eg I'm like / not like etc).

In this technique there is an attempt to find out how a person perceives another's identity. That is, what kind of person, a person is; who (in other words) the person is, and what that person as we say is like. Through conversation there is an attempt to expand upon elaborations in order to elicit the underlying theories of the individual concerned. The individual is increasingly encouraged to define exactly what they mean by their constructs.

The subject is asked for a characteristic of someone they know, then they are asked for the contrast or difference description to the one previously provided. The subject is then asked to elaborate each pole of the construct via a particular style of questioning such as the following.

Eg, What kind of a person has such a characteristic? What kind of person is most different ? What would that be like? And, How would that show itself? etc.

Subordinate constructs are more concrete and can be represented by movement down a pyramid. In moving down the construct hierarchy it is possible to elaborate each pole of the construct (emergent and contrast poles). This elaboration from both poles can then be repeated at each lower level of the construct hierarchy producing a layout on the page in the form of a pyramid.

c) Why it is appropriate in this research.

Dalton (1996) explores the development of construing in children and young people. She describes how research into their verbalized constructions reveals that younger children tend to use fewer and more concrete constructs. These constructs tend to be more loosely organised and are therefore considered more open to change. Winter (1992) demonstrates that there is an increasing emergence of psychological as opposed to physical constructs which occurs with age and that older children use constructs in a more complex, discriminating, logically consistent and less lopsided fashion.

The Landfield (1971) Pyramiding technique seeks to explore the subordinate and more concrete constructs with individuals. It may be therefore a more appropriate technique when exploring young primary aged pupils views of their school experiences in a personal construct verbal interview. The seeking of concrete constructs may also be more relevant for children who have limited expressive language abilities and therefore have difficulty verbalising their views.

Fransella and Dalton (1990) feel that the main reason for using techniques such as pyramiding is that they provide the researcher and the subject with a more precise picture of the subject's system for construing the world than can normally be gained. Also that stemming as they do from the personal construct framework they give indications of possible new avenues or alternative constructions for the individual to explore.

d) How pyramiding is applied within the research.

The 'pyramiding' procedure involves asking the person to successively to 'climb down' their construct system to more and more concrete or subordinate levels. A construct is elicited from the subject and contrasting poles are then sought. One element of the pole is then explored followed by the other element. Contrast poles are sought for each of the new response elicited. Following the drawing out of the elements of a construct the

researcher might then explore the subject's understanding by asking specific questions such as 'what kind of a person is someone who 'misbehaves in class''? (See Shane Appendix 2a, page 52) or 'a Mr know it all' (Gareth Appendix 2b, page 60).

The pyramid allows an elaboration of the individual's initial construct. This technique can be seen in the conversation with Michael (Chapter 4, Analysis and Findings, section C The Pupil Conversational Data and Appendix 2c, page 29). Here there is an exploration of Michael's construct of 'friends' vs 'not friends'. Through elaboration he was able to expand on this original construct by describing other similar and different ways in which he theorises about persons and by implication himself. Following the elaboration of the constructs it may be useful to ask the subject to place themselves at one end of the construct and ask them why they have done so.

Michael was asked 'what sort of a person is someone who had no friends' he replied someone who was 'upset ... alone ... and not playing with someone else'. The next question to Michael would have been 'what kind of a person is a person who is alone' followed by '... or upset,' and then '... has no one to play with'. The same type of questioning then takes place with the opposite pole of the construct. The answers given are then depicted in schematic form in the shape of a pyramid. Questions can then be designed to seek out specific behaviours such as 'how do you know a person is upset? What do they actually do that makes you think they are upset?' etc.

A further example of the technique of pyramiding occurs in the conversation with Kyli, A where she is asked 'what sort of a person is a person who blames people' and she explains that it is someone who 'try and get people up into their gangs and that' (eg to do things such as bully other children) and when they don't 'they go and tell the teacher you have done something' (wrong). (See Appendix 2c, page 67)

In this conversational style of eliciting constructs the pupil can be asked to focus on an admired or respected acquaintance and then to focus on one aspect of their character which can be their most important value or noticeable behaviour. This approach can be used to focus on characters and situations in the three drawings.

Fransella and Dalton (1990) believe this procedure can be particularly useful when exploring an individual's interpersonal relationships which can lead to suggestions for such developments as 'social-skills training'. For example having found out what the personal meaning for what sort of a person 'you can't rely on' (Kyli, A page 71, Appendix 2c) then role play could be used to explore how an unreliable person could be included in activities and encouraged to be more consistent. Pyramiding can be used in conjunction with the self-characterisation technique and follows naturally from the triadic comparisons using the drawings produced.

e) Conclusion to Pyramiding.

Exploring an individual's world requires a movement within the construct hierarchy. Moving down through the hierarchy requires asking question which focus on the 'what' and 'how' of experiences. The mountain climbing (descending) analogy may help to understand that when starting from the same point at the peak there may be many choices of path to take. The details exposed will depend on the paths taken. The pyramiding technique allows the subject to be guided along their own selected path as they explore their views of their world and the characteristics of the people and themselves within that world.

Conclusion to Personal Construct Psychology.

The personal construct approaches as described by Ravenette(1997) and Landfield (1971) both as a drawing technique and as a conversational method are used in this study. I felt this approach to be appropriate for junior aged pupils in terms of exploring their views and helping them to feel

comfortable during the sessions. It also allowed them to engage as participants in the research.

The aim of research is to engage in a collaborative exploration of equality and mutuality in order to gain an insiders view of part of the participants reality. At the same time it is acknowledged that the research questions are necessarily part of the researcher's construct system. It is a theory that applies not only to some external reality, but to the very beings engaged in the pursuit of theories, ie ourselves. Bannister. P, et al (1995) in discussing PCT considers that both the researcher and participants are involved in interacting and construing. The richness and relevance of the personal experience of all participants are acknowledged and validated. The subjectivity of both the researcher and the researched is embraced. People are recognised as complex beings rather than being reduced to isolated variables. Participants' constructions are valued.

The use of PCP theory in interviewing children supports the seeking of pupil views where it can elicit the distinct way of viewing their own particular world. It is non directive and creates a safe relaxed atmosphere which allows children to express themselves reliably. The researcher is able to show a demonstrable interest in the child's view where there is a freedom of expectation from any particular pupil response. The 'conversation' or interviewing takes place within the child's system of construing the world.

The research process offers all who take part the opportunity for new understandings and self development. The completed research is a more or less useful construction, which is, of course open to reconstruction.

E) Conclusion.

It is important to acknowledge the specific context of the educational careers of the pupils involved. That is, that they may have a history of

being categorised as having additional / special educational needs, but should be seen as individuals with individual needs. Booth et al (2000) in the Index for Inclusion consider that the term special educational needs is no longer appropriate and can actually be a barrier to inclusive practice through labelling, lowered expectations and categorising that implies the sole responsibility of a specialist teacher. The school may well be located within a certain socio-economic area which impacts upon parental, teacher and pupil expectations of how the pupils should aspire and perform. However in arguing for a social model of difficulties rather than a student deficit one, there is an acceptance that the concept of 'special educational needs' remains part of the culture and policy of all schools.

This study explored the contribution that children's drawings can make in support of a personal construct psychology conversation with junior aged pupils. The aim was to understand their views of themselves and their school experiences. The drawings about themselves in school and the subsequent conversations about those drawings involve exploring their interpersonal relationships in the educational setting. This may then help to understand their attitudes towards themselves and significant others, to school life's stresses and strains and to their fears and anxieties. There is a considerable body of evidence (Burns 1982) that the emotional disposition of children is an important factor in the learning process. More recent evidence (Thomas and Silk 1990, and Moore 1990) indicates that children's drawings can be powerful indicators and communicators of children's emotional states and experiences. Moore (1990) considers that this has been particularly relevant in work with children who have suffered abuse. Berryman (1987) supports this view that drawings can provide a unique insight into the child's experiences and that they can often reveal what children think which can then support what they say.

CHAPTER 3.

RESEARCH DESIGN.

A) Introduction and Overview.

This chapter sets out my methodological position, the rationale for pupil selection and the methods of data collection and analysis.

The study investigated the perceptions that children on the special educational needs register of a junior school have about their educational experiences. No distinction was made between the prescribed formal learning curriculum and the informal hidden curriculum.

Data was collected by inviting pupils to draw a series of pictures of themselves in school and then to have a discussion about their drawings. Further discussion took place with each pupil on a subsequent visit when the drawings were used to facilitate a semi-structured interview. These conversations and discussions followed the style of Landfield (1971), Ravenette (1980) and Beaver (1996) who used personal construct psychology techniques when working with children, as discussed in the literature review chapter. It was anticipated that the drawings and conversations would incorporate the affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects of the individuals' school lives.

Research Phases brief overview.

Year 1 The Preliminary Study.

The drawing collection method was trialed with 72 ten year old mainstream pupils organised into small groups.

Reflection period - redraft research proposal.

Year 2 and 3 The Main Study.

Phase I. The initial drawing collection and conversations.

Phase 2. The personal construct discussions.

Phase 3. Interviews with the A/SenCo.

B) Methodological Issues.

Paradigm position.

In this study I have taken the position of a qualitative researcher within the naturalistic paradigm. This acknowledges the mutual influence that the researcher and the respondents have on each other and that in order to get to the relevant matters of human activity the researcher must be involved in the activity. I acknowledge therefore that I have prior assumptions and biases which I bring to the study which should be recognised and stated. These will influence the way I have gone about the research and the sense I made of the process and the findings. I have both influenced and been influenced by the research process. This raises the issues of researcher bias and reactivity.

Crabtree and Miller (1992) consider that doing research is in many ways like taking a descriptive and explanatory snapshot of reality. For each particular snapshot or photograph the investigator must decide what kind of camera to use, what scene on which to focus, through what filter and with what intent. The area under study was viewed through the experientially engaged and perceptually limited lens of the researcher using a qualitative filter. A case enquiry approach was used where the investigator's intuition and ideas sat comfortably with a design which was open minded and interpretive. This allowed qualitative descriptions to be made which explored meanings, variations and perceptual experiences of school phenomena as experienced by the participants.

Kuhn (1970) considers that there are a number of competing research perspectives or paradigms. These alternative approaches to enquiry show that no one approach can do justice to research questions. Burden (1993) considers that it is necessary therefore to develop an understanding that occurs within a plurality of theoretical orientations where reality and truth can be multiple.

A paradigm is the philosophical framework within which research or inquiry takes place and is considered to be the overarching and interconnecting assumptions and understandings which attempt to explain the nature of truth and reality. The methodology selected for this study is that described by Bannister et al (1995) as the new paradigm or naturalistic approach. It is a way of looking at the world which affirms the mutual influence the researcher and the respondents have on each other. A distinction is made between the logical positivist approach where traditional research design and methodology lead to an accumulation of a particular kind and that of the constructivist approach where knowledge is seen as arising out of an individual's search for meaning. That is, there is an active process view of knowledge, not a mere discovery of it. There is an attempt to understand the way in which people make sense of what happens in their lives and how they behave accordingly.

The position taken within the naturalistic paradigm is that assumptions structure all research and the least we should do as researchers is to recognise this and theorise their impact. This stance explores the way we understand the nature of reality which in turn affects the way we see ourselves in relation to knowledge. The naturalistic paradigm as described by Erlandson et al (1993) considers that knowledge arises out of the individual's search for meaning and is co-constructed through interactions and that the 'knower' cannot be separated from what is 'known'. This is an alternative stance to the positivist paradigm which considers that knowledge can be separated into parts and examined individually, that the 'knower' and the researcher can stand apart from that which is being examined.

The naturalistic understanding informs a qualitative approach to investigation through exploring words, actions and communications in narrative or descriptive ways. This allows semi-structured interactive approaches to information gathering which attempt to represent more closely the situation as experienced by the participants. Learning is seen as being an interactive social construction and the concept of enquiry as an

illuminative process where truth is seen as both relative and contextually located. The term 'thematic analysis' is used for the process of making sense of these experiences and interactions. This ensures that there is a central ethos of valuing what people say and communicate and treating this as both meaningful and informative. Research is therefore viewed as a collaborative enterprise which sees participants as co-researchers who enter fully into the process. This also helps to ensure a responsibility by the researcher to be accountable.

In this study I worked with individual children and explored their views of their educational experiences. Data was collected in a semi-structured way which allowed me to act as a participant observer. Children were encouraged to respond to open ended and semi-structured activities, situations and questions about their experiences. I saw my role as a facilitator which allowed me to be part of the data collection process and thereby help pupils to recall situations and events which could then be initially documented and represented via a drawing task. This position acknowledged that I was not outside the research and was therefore unable to take the stance of an impartial observer. Subjective researchers are exposed therefore to the same constraints in understanding the world as the persons they are investigating.

Qualitative Approaches.

Bannister et al (1995) consider the following reasons for using the qualitative approach to information gathering.

- * It is a way of exploring complex issues. To view the system under study within the wider contexts and situations within which it exists. It seeks to be able to go beyond the surface or local features.
- * The natural setting is the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument in accessing the data. Context specific knowledge is therefore sought.

* Within an interactive process the researcher is encouraged to confront his/her own participation within the research. That is, to acknowledge and question the assumptions and understandings that we bring to the research and which inform our own perception of reality and truth. This is a process of reflexivity which is central to qualitative work and helps to inform the process of transforming an interactive data gathering process into a piece of written research. The researcher reflects on his/her own experience within the conduct of the research.

* Information gathering is seen as a dialogue or conversation with a purpose. It is essential however to consider for whose purpose the dialogue is and the power relationships within that interaction. This places an importance on the ethics and morality-politics of research practice. Research is considered to be 'with' participants and informants, rather than 'on' people or subjects. Burden (1996) documents the move towards working with children.

* That there is no one absolute and agreed upon 'reality' that has an objective truth.

* It attempts to provide descriptions of the settings and occasions, rather than to intervene, manipulate and change behaviour. It is acknowledged however that qualitative action research does attempt to influence and change situations.

* There is a concern for subjective meanings of how participants perceive their lives and their interactions. This includes the 'meanings' they accord to the topic of the data collecting interaction. There is an attempt to discover the individual biography of the settings and to capture a recognisable reality.

Kelly (1955) through his personal construct theory sought to understand the individual in their own terms and how they are trying to make sense of their

world. This position is discussed at length in the literature review. Stoker (1996) considers that a central aspect of this theory is that the correspondence between what people 'think' really exists and what 'actually' really exists is a continually changing one. Research therefore should involve methods of recording phenomena in terms of participants understanding which focuses on everyday practical reasoning, personal accounts and the sense they make of the world. The interpretive research paradigm used in this study therefore attempts to understand and 'make sense' of the world with the intended outcome of an illuminative subjective understanding.

The particular method of inquiry selected for this study is based upon a phenomenological position which has a focus on understanding the meaning that events and actions have for the persons being studied. The individual and their world are considered to coexist and to be co-constituted. The person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world and the world as having no existence apart from the person.

If reality is therefore considered to be multiple and constructed then causal links will also be multiple and constructed. The meaning attached to an event or action is therefore multidirectional and not unidirectional. The qualitative researcher will therefore ask different questions and take different approaches to research than that of the quantitative researcher.

Individuals make sense of their experiences through constructing or construing as they experience within the context of what they already know and understand. This encompasses a broad definition of education and includes both the social and academic experiences. That is, lessons and planned experiences in the formal sense and the social interactions which take place in unstructured and unsupervised situations. This constructivist position also acknowledges the value laden position of the researcher. This philosophy has informed my thinking and underpins my understanding of the construction of knowledge. This questions my professional and

personal value and belief systems as a learner, an educator and a parent within a framework of how I perceive children as pupils and learners.

I feel a child centred approach to research can be justified from the following positions. Firstly that it is important in any research or learning situation to start where or understand where 'the pupil is' in a developmental sense. This should incorporate an understanding of their emotional, social and intellectual developmental in relation to their ability to experience situations and to express themselves. Secondly that child centred research respects the right of the child to give informed consent, to be heard, listened to and taken into consideration.

The collaborative understanding of research can also be seen as a process of consultancy. That is, the role of the outside agency is non directive and yet attempts to help the school with its decision making and problem solving activities. This in turn influences our own understanding of ourselves. Hayes (1997) feels that people are active agents who monitor, update and assess their biographies in order to present a certain view of themselves, both to themselves and to other people. His work reflects the thoughts of George Mead (1934) who suggested that a key aspect of what it is to be human is the ability to reflect on what one is like, and in turn change the view of oneself that one carries about.

C) Rationale for selection of the participants.

An opportunity sample of thirteen pupils on the special educational needs register of the school were invited to join the research. A description of the school context and the pupils can be found in Appendix 6. These pupils were in the upper junior school age bracket (attaining the ages of 9, 10 and 11 in the academic year) can be considered to be at a particular developmental stage in terms of their social, emotional and cognitive development. They were all included on the special needs register in the

primary categories of social and emotional needs, although they showed a range of complex needs.

Eiser (1989) considers that most work with children's understandings of their own situations has been based upon stage development. That is, they progress through a series of age-related stages in understanding, paralleling the shift from pre operational to formal operations as described by Piaget (1930). Children between the ages of seven and twelve are generally considered to have attained the stage of concrete operations which means they are able to have an understanding of events and behaviours that they have experienced themselves and which have direct relevance for them. Donaldson (1978) has shown that children between these ages have the ability to represent things to themselves and can therefore often transmit this thinking to others.

Gorman (1980) feels that for these reasons children at this stage of development are accurate and reliable historians of their own experiences and situations. Ireland and Holloway (1996) support this viewpoint that children are able to give accurate information about themselves and their experiences. They are able to form perceptions, have the mental agility and give reliable information about themselves. They feel that children of this age group (7-12 years) do have a lively imagination and use a rich imagery which does not detract from accuracy, but actually confirms it. They speculate that pupils who have specific conditions (eg special educational needs) and receive particular programmes or 'treatment' actually become more sophisticated in their understanding of their own needs and situations. They conclude that children of this age can give a lively and accurate account of their experiences which should be heard by those adults who are involved in their education. Alderson (1995) supports the view that children are reliable in their accounts.

Pupils of this age are also considered to be at a developmental stage which allows drawings to be explicit enough to reflect meaning that other people

can interpret. Sutton (1996) documents the accepted stages that children move through in their drawing development. She comments that a significant developmental change begins to occur at about 6 to 8 years of age. The pupil is able to move from representing objects and events in a form which they know exists to representing them as they are seen. That is, young pupils may make x-ray or transparency type drawings (eg legs are seen within trousers etc) which is termed to be at a stage of intellectual realism. However as they develop, they move through towards a stage of visual realism where they are able to represent their experiences as they see them, (people, objects etc may be partially hidden if they are behind other figures etc). Pupils aged 9, 10 and 11 should therefore be moving towards and developing the skills of visual realism.

Thomas and Silk (1990) also consider this stage of transition in skills and thinking, and feel that drawings produced by pupils entering the visual realism stage can be more readily and easily understood by other people. They are more likely to portray good basic figures (head / trunk) and additional features (hands and fingers etc). They are also more able to draw relationships between objects and people and to draw more reliably from their own viewpoint. That is, they can produce drawings which are understandable and more accessible to other people. Koppitz (1968) feels that drawings are a particularly valuable means of assessing children's attitudes, needs and conflicts especially in middle childhood eg ages 5-11.

The pupils in this study may therefore be moving from a stage of drawing where they are considered to have freedom of expression (with less caution about the publicness of their work) towards a stage where they are more able to technically and artistically represent their views. This latter stage may however also develop a sensitive awareness of their skills and the influence and impact of an audience (eg, teacher, parents, peers and researchers). They are however still considered to be at a developmental stage where their drawings are explicit enough to reflect meaning that other people can interpret.

These pupils are therefore considered to be at a developmental stage which allows them to understand their situations in both a cognitive and emotional way and to express themselves meaningfully in a range of ways which include their drawings. Nevertheless as in most developmental theories one would expect pupils to be making a transition between the stages.

D) Method section.

Case study approaches.

Introduction.

The method selected for data collecting within the research is that of case study where it is considered by

Golby (1994) considers case study is an inquiry into a phenomenon (eg pupils' views of their experiences) within real life contexts (school and their interactions with other people) where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. To study a case is to observe it closely and render it in some way intelligible. To inspect through a particular lens that is guided by concepts and interests.

Educational case study allows a variety of research methods to be followed in order to focus the enquiry around an instance. The cases must be examples of something and identifying them implies that the researcher sees them in relation to a wider set of ideas. The case or cases are usually an entity of intrinsic value and interest not merely a sample from which to learn about the population. It is a case within a bounded system. The evidence will be heterogeneous, that is consist of items that cannot be simply added up to make a total, but which must be weighed and judged one against the other.

Background.

Stenhouse (1988) argues that there are different forms of case study research whilst Bassey (1999) cites a number of different definitions. Yin

(1993) however categorised three different forms. Firstly that of exploratory which is concerned with 'defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study' and 'to discover theory by directly observing social phenomenon in it's 'raw' form'. Secondly that of explanatory which 'presents data bearing on cause and effect relationships' and thirdly descriptive, which 'presents a complete descriptive of a phenomenon within its context'. This research used aspects of all these three approaches in order to illustrate in depth the research questions.

Despite these differences the basic aims of case study methodology are to create an understanding of a group of people whether that understanding be exploratory, explanatory or descriptive. Drever (1995) summarised case study methodology by considering that it does not aim to cover a whole population and extract common factors, but aims to provide an in-depth picture of a particular area of the educational world. Robson (1993) defined case study methodology to be 'a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon within the real life context using multiple sources of evidence'. This allows for different data collection or generation strategies and devices to be used in combination to answer the research questions

Justifying a Case Study approach.

Golby (1994) justifies a case study approach in education by considering that it can lead to the improvement of practice. Case study suggests an academic approach to practical problems (for example asking children their views) which can be of real, practical significance. Practical problems can be investigated in ways which allow educationalists to re-conceptualise the problem, understand more fully its wider significance and act more intelligently in resolving it.

Professionals who are involved with cases are seeking appropriate ways of working or acting in relation to those individuals. The audience is an active audience of the practising community who wants to know what to do about

educational problems. They are interested not merely in knowledge, but in action. Case study is therefore synonymous with professional activity, it is what professionals do day by day. Educational research by case study can be seen as the pursuit of professional excellence through academic means. In such an endeavour it is important to recognise that it is not just having a body of knowledge that is the hallmark of professional activity, but the accessing of that knowledge in relation to particular cases.

Golby (1994) argues that case study has the unique capacity to serve both academic and professional purposes and to integrate two interests in educational research which have been apart for a long time. The coming together of theory and practice. Academic quality is not so much a question of description versus analysis but of the quality of analysis found within the description. Case study is not just about portraying a case but also providing a research community with the wherewithal to benefit from it in terms of further enquiries elsewhere.

Case study can be appropriate where there is a sense of perplexity, problems to be addressed and a sense of the researchers's interest in those problems. This includes my interest in talking with and finding out from children their views of their school experiences. The researcher is able to examine his /her own prejudices and be open to a range of possibilities within the research.

Considerations when planning to use a Case Study approach.

Erlandson et al (1993) document the following areas of importance.

*** Purposive sampling.**

There should be an attempt to maximise discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems that occur in the particular context under study. Purposive and directed sampling through human instrumentation increases the range of data exposed and maximises the researcher's ability to identify emerging themes that take adequate account of contextual conditions and

cultural norms. Sample size should be more for quality than quantity and more for information richness rather than information volume.

* Sources of evidence.

All informants have their perspectives and all items of evidence their relevance. Rigour demands that sources of evidence and the research techniques brought to bear upon them are selected and integrated in conformity with the principles of validity and reliability. No one point of view is final, all have their contribution.

* Interviewing as method.

Interviews take the form of a dialogue or an interaction and are a conversation with a purpose. Interviews allow the researcher and the respondent to move back and forth in time, to reconstruct the past, interpret the present and predict the future. Mertens (1999) considers that the primary emphasis of a focus interview is gaining information about the subjective perceptions of respondents. An important aspect of interviewing therefore is concerned with the opinions, reactions, feelings, thoughts and perceptions of the respondents. Drever (1995) asserts that semi-structured interviews are well-suited to case studies because they enable the interviewer to explore different individuals' perspectives in greater depth than would be possible with structured interviews or questionnaires. Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider that interviews also help the researcher to understand and put into larger context the interpersonal, social and cultural aspects of the environment.

There are issues that can question the reliability of interviewing techniques. These include interviewer pleasing or even the presence of the researcher as interviewer as in the Hawthorne effect as described in Newton and Wilson (1999). Cooper (1993) feels that the nature of pupils' perceptions will be influenced by the circumstances that prevail when we ask them. He believes that researchers must make efforts to take account of the ways in which the pupil's responses might be distorted by those circumstances. The

instrument if designed appropriately however will enable open-ended questions to be asked with a structure that maintains order in its approaches.

*** Methodological triangulation.**

Different methods produce different sorts of evidence and therefore present a challenge of how to integrate both methods and evidence inside a rationale for the work and a developing understanding as it progresses.

Case study data is highly interconnected and can be 'thick like spaghetti'.

The researcher should develop an appreciation of the milieu and anticipate that critical understandings depend on interactions between subjects and their environment. Each case is embedded in historical, social, political and other contexts. The social context is often pre-emptive.

*** Ethical considerations.**

Ethical questions arise whenever people interact. Educational research is a special case of truth seeking and truth telling. Research design, methods and techniques are specialised ways of testing beliefs and opinions and getting at the 'truth of things'. Case study can be flexible and opportunistic, embedded in 'real life' social settings and has less established ground rules and therefore is delicately placed when considering ethical issues.

Openness and honesty are fundamental absolutes where all intentions should be made apparent to all concerned from the outset. There should be an awareness of the micro politics and interests of those involved. The case study researcher must be prepared for results which are personally and professionally discomfiting and owes it to the researched community to be ethically clear on this.

Full disclosure of the aims can alter the nature of the subsequent project to the extent that those who are involved know what you are looking at and are likely to present that part of their work in the best possible light. The researcher can end up looking not at what is 'naturally' the case but at what people present as the case. This can result in studying a series of relatively

set pieces. There is a need therefore to be open about intentions but also to allow for the resulting behaviour.

* Data collection.

Data collection and selection of evidence goes on continuously, requires a high degree of self-consciousness and a continuous interrogation of material. A judgement is made as to what the researcher takes to be relevant in the various items collected.

Data is not evidence until it has been interpreted as such. Evidence that comes in case study is qualitative and comparisons between the various items of evidence can only be made by an act of judgement. The protocol of data collection within this research therefore had to seem like a normal educational experience received within an everyday classroom activity, but sophisticated enough to answer meaningful research questions. The instructions had to be practical and the task to be carried out by the pupils had to meet the research standards of credibility and trustworthiness. The research diary helps to provide a continuous record of how the data is beginning to make sense as evidence. A chronicle is a record of events, a history an interpretation. The study of the evidence is the final form of the research as written up.

* The researcher's relationship to the study.

Case studies inevitably involve the researcher in close relationships with individuals and institutions. Case study researchers are often members of the institutions under study and they acknowledge the effect of their presence and perspectives on the study itself.

The researcher needs to come to terms with the individuals, the institutions and the processes which constitute the study. They will be on a close relationship to action studied. Being close to the action gives very good access, yet insiders easily overlook matters through familiarity that visitors

may find startling. There needs to be good procedures for ensuring as far as possible an appropriate form of objectivity.

I am also researching part of myself, my own practice. I will be looking with different eyes towards the end of the project and be making fresh appraisals of my work. The research diary can again provide a source of evidence from which to document such self study and personal development as part of the overall study. Thus they are in a sense part of the study and not detached from it. This naturally affects writing styles.

*** Report Writing.**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed that the case study accompanied by a methodological report is the preferred reporting mode of choice for the naturalistic study. This allows for thick description that puts the reader vicariously into the context and allows him or her to interact with the data presented. The reader's comprehension is shaped by the explicit and implicit priorities and judgements of the researcher. The reader however by being allowed to interact with the data in their total context, will be encouraged to extend the researcher's analysis to greater depth and in new directions.

Case studies may contain material produced at various stages of a project, linked by a commentary. It is likely anyway that there will be many threads un-disentangled, many paths unexplored, simply recognising them as such entails an open textured style. The report is recognised not as a true representation of reality, but as an interaction, hopefully a meaningful, useful and rich interaction between observed and observer; a constructed reality.

*** Quality Control.**

Within case study there should be reasonable procedures that diminish or reduce factors such as observer bias, atypical events being taken as typical, false inferences and shaky generalisations. Methods should be appropriate

in order to provide construct validity which avoids criticism of subjectivity or impressionism in the conclusions.

Case study is an exercise in making the cases intelligible and should be seen as examples of a wider set of theoretical ideas. Yin (1989) calls the process analytic generalisation where the generalisation is qualitatively to ideas and contributes to external validity.

There should be reliability of the consistency in procedures and findings and the degree to which they are replicable. Readers should be able to recognise the authenticity of the cases studied. What is recognised are similarities across different contexts. Readers should then be able to investigate their own situations and contexts (as far as they are similar) and using the same techniques and procedures come to similar results. Reliability is the thin tissue that connects different experiences in different contexts under common frameworks of investigation and analysis.

Conclusion.

Golby (1994) considers that the characteristics of good case study are as follows,

- * Having a significant focus within a small area of enquiry.
- * Points of view other than the author's are considered and evaluated.
- * An account of ethical principles and how these enter into key decisions.
- * Successful integration of qualitatively different material.
- * The whole study has the 'ring of truth'.
- * A sense of completeness about the study, but with a sense of what further enquiries have been opened up.

Erlandson et al (1994) add that there must be evidence in the report that the constructions of the various stakeholders have been earnestly acquired and honoured and that the informed consent of the stakeholders is continually renegotiated.

The protocol of data collection therefore had to seem like a normal educational experience received within an everyday classroom activity, but sophisticated enough to answer meaningful research questions. The instructions had to be practical and the task to be carried out by the pupils had to meet the research standards of credibility and trustworthiness.

Research Design overview.

Research Proposal submitted January 1997.

Year 1 preliminary study.

Research proposal rewritten in light of feedback and reflection.

Year 2/3 pre data collection phase.

Select and negotiate access to the school and pupils.

Parental permission was sought by letter and informed consent through individual discussions with the pupils, together with the cooperation of the school A/SenCo. An overt intention was to develop the notion of the pupil giving informed consent to take part in the research and to be able to withdraw at any time. This was seen as a continual process which needed to be revisited and obtained each time I visited the school and talked with the participants.

Year 2/3 data collection.

Pupil session 1 - drawing collection and initial conversation.

Pupil session 2 - PCP discussion and further drawings.

A/SenCo series of discussions.

A/SenCo culminating conversation.

Procedure for Year 2/3.

Each pupil was seen individually in a quiet room in school attached to the special needs department. They were asked to produce three drawings of themselves in school and to take part in a PCP learning conversation. All discussions, incidental conversations or talk was audio recorded and hand written field notes were also taken. These sources of information supported the drawing and discussion analysis.

Phase 1.

The initial pupil drawing sessions.

Drawing examples are located in Appendix 1 and labelled as D1, D2, etc for each pupil.

a) Introduction.

This allowed me to reintroduce myself to the pupil, build rapport and set the scene for the session in terms of ensuring that they gave informed consent and knew what we were going to do. My script closely adhered to the following, although I approached it in a conversational style and took account that I was already known to the pupil.

'I am a visitor to the school today and have come to talk to you. I am also a psychologist / researcher and not a teacher in your school although you might have seen me here before. I am collecting views about school, I call it finding out and other people call it collecting data. Whatever we call it, I am here to listen to you, to find out what you think about school. I am interested in you in school and what happens with regard to people, places, things, events, situations and happenings. I am interested in how you feel in these situations and when things happen to you'.

'I would like to find out about these experiences by asking you to do some drawings of yourself in school and then to talk about school and the drawings. I have chosen to use drawings and they will be just for me. I will not put them up on a board for everyone else to see or take them away and show them to anyone else. There will be no right or wrong ways of drawing, there will be no specific artistic skill needed and the drawings will not be marked or shown to other people, unless of course you want someone special to see them'.

Throughout this preamble I referred a number of times to the pupil having a choice in whether they stayed or not, what we talked about, what they drew and that our conversations were confidential.

b) The concept map.

Examples of these are in Appendix 5a.

I used the term concept map to refer to the simple yet powerful way in which to generate, sort and arrange any set of elements from children. Pritchard (1997) considers this to be a particularly useful way of clarifying children's knowledge and understanding about particular areas. This can be in the form of ideas, concepts, events, statements or procedures in a visually explicit manner using words, pictures and symbols with connecting lines.

Each pupil was asked to jointly explore with myself the experience of school and to draw a spider map around the word 'school'. I asked them open-ended questions about why they came to school, what they did when they were there and what people they came into contact with during the school day. This involved raising ideas and thoughts about people, places, situations, events, activities, occurrences and interactions etc.

This co-construction of a piece of work about school served a number of purposes and was introduced as follows, 'I would like to talk to you about school, I'll ask you some questions and you tell me what you think. ... I'll make some notes, drawings and pictures on this paper as we talk'. Joint creation of the concept map involved drawing out the affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects of the pupil's school experience. This reflects the work of Bannister, P. (1995) where there is a consideration that experiences are received at all levels of awareness.

The rationale for using this approach for rapport building and eliciting ideas about school is taken from the work of Butterfield (1997) who suggests the following justification for its use.

- * It is more approachable than just asking.
- * It helps pupils to reveal complexities within their conceptualisation of their work.
- * It helps to create a greater field of shared material between the researcher and the participant. That is, both can look at the 'map' at the same time.

- * There is a degree of respondent validation within the discussion.

The pupils used their own words to represent elements in response to open ended questions. This production of elements then led into the development of constructs in the personal construct drawings and conversations.

Once a certain level of rapport had been achieved and the pupil had volunteered a range of views about school I considered the opportunity to draw had presented itself.

c) Drawing 1.

The pupil was then provided with paper and pencil and asked to draw a picture of themselves in school (D1). No restriction was put on the content or location of the picture and the pupil was simply asked 'please can you draw a picture of yourself in school'. No time limit was set although it was noted that pupils in these one to one sessions drew very quickly compared with those in the group settings in year 1. Open-ended answers were given if the pupil questioned such things as 'where should it be' or 'who should I put in it' etc.

The pupil was then asked to talk about the drawing in terms of the surface content, their interpretation of what was happening and how the people in the picture might be feeling. A typical question would be 'can you tell me a bit more about this', rather than using direct questions such as 'who is this and what are they doing' etc.

Basic personal constructs and themes were collaboratively drawn out from the main message in the picture in order to develop an understanding of what the bi polar opposites might be. There was a search for what was committed and what was omitted in the drawings and explanations. The pupil was encouraged to understand their picture in terms of what sort of characteristics the people in the picture might have. There was an initial

attempt to explore the individual's meaning that they placed on their picture. This helped them to have an idea of the constructs they were conveying and what might be the opposite or different from that view. This was encouraged by asking for words or ideas about how some of the people in the pictures might be feeling or thinking. A title was also asked for and was written in by the pupil or myself if they wished.

The pupil was then asked to draw a second picture (D2) which was the 'opposite of' and 'different from' their first picture. That is, what would a 'not (title of / construct of D1) picture be like'? For example if D1 was of a 'lonely' scene then a drawing was asked for which showed a 'not lonely' scene. An opposite title to that of the first drawing might be asked for as a prompt.

d) Drawing 2.

A second picture (D2) was then drawn. A discussion then took place following a similar style to that used with D1 with a title being asked for. Themes and constructs were again searched for.

e) Drawing 3.

A third picture (D3) of the pupil in school was then asked for without reference to the other pictures already drawn. A discussion followed as with the previous drawings and a title was again asked for.

At this stage there was no specific attempt made to explore beyond the superficial features and content of the drawings and the relationships between them. Some pupils did enter into some depth however and this was not discouraged. Their views were documented and recorded.

Following Session 1 the individual pupil drawings and any subsequent transcribed conversations were analysed using the method described by Furth (1988). This reflective process allowed hypotheses to be generated regarding each pupil's understanding and view of school and 'how it might

be' for them. This allowed the preparation of potential questions and hypotheses to support the personal construct interview in Session 2. Following all the initial pupil sessions there was a return to the drawing collection for group analysis. The method for analysing the drawings as a group followed that used by Tamm (1996) as trialed in year 1. That is, pictures were analysed for surface content and categorised into themes which then allowed group hypotheses to be generated.

Phase 2.

The subsequent pupil PCP sessions.

This involved returning to school to see all the participants for the specific personal construct psychology discussions in the style of Ravenette (1988b) and Beaver (1996). This initially involved using the three previously collected drawings in a triadic comparison method as described by Fransella and Dalton (1990). These conversations were supported by using the Landfield (1971) pyramiding characterisation technique. These sessions also facilitated a fourth culminating drawing to be completed at the request of the participant.

These conversations took the following form and were all audio recorded and supported with hand written field notes.

a) This involved asking the participant to describe the surface details of each drawing in turn. Their responses then formed a platform for moving from the concrete to a deeper psychological level in terms of understanding. The following form of questioning was used.

Let's talk about the picture, can you tell me more about it?

Where is it?

Who is in the picture?

What are they doing?

Etc.

b) This involved going beyond the surface detail by asking the types of questions as documented by Beaver (1996). He describes a method of asking questions and a range of possible questions when talking to young children. He feels they may help to develop the discussion and reach deeper levels of understanding. These were found to be particularly useful throughout this study and are described below. There was an attempt to draw out the affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects of the construction of the picture.

* Questions to open up the discussion.

Can you tell me more about ... ?

Which picture would you rather be in ... ?

How could we make school more like this ... or that ... ?

What would need to change to make this ... happen ... ?

How would people need to be different in order to allow change?

What would need to change to allow people to do things differently?

What would have to happen to change things?

* Questions which help to explore their perspectives of themselves.

Trying to explore how the participant understands their drawings from their point of view.

How do you think they/this person feels in this situation?

How do you feel here?

How do you think others feel?

How do you think this situation occurred?

How do the people feel?

Etc.

* Their views of what other people may think. Trying to get other people's views.

What do you think they think?

What do you think they think about you?

What would a significant adult (eg head teacher/parent) think if they,

Saw you in this picture?
Saw other people in the picture?
If they saw this drawing?
Etc.

*** Seeking Beliefs Level.**

What kind of a person would think like this?
What kind of person would see the school/situation like this - that?
What makes a person be like that in school?

c) This involved using the three pictures and allowed the triadic comparison method of PCP to be used. That is, the participant chose two pictures from three and through a discussion was encouraged to seek similarities and differences between the two pictures. This process is underpinned by the personal construct psychological theory that individuals will understand their situation or position in life by what they imply and deny in their communications, that is what they see as similarities and differences. This was done by discussing each drawing in turn and then comparing it with another picture and then the third picture. This was done until all pictures were compared with each other.

d) Once this discussion process was in progress it allowed specific themes and constructs to be further elicited and elaborated on by using the Landfield (1971) pyramiding techniques as described in the literature review. These constructs can be described and extended as they appear in conjunction with the picture triadic sort method.

These interview techniques explored pupils' thoughts, feelings and behaviours by using the drawings as a focus as well as using them to facilitate a shared understanding through discussion. This occurred after first obtaining a shared practical focus through the concept map and the drawings which were considered to be very powerful techniques. The aim was to discuss and reach through an inductive process that which was

important to the pupils. During this process my original thoughts, ideas and hypotheses were checked whilst new ideas were incorporated into our dialogue.

These interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and thematically analysed. Additional drawings (D4) were also encouraged and accepted during these second session discussions. Throughout the sessions there was a sense of 'visual' back translation in terms of interview technique. As new themes and ideas emerged they were continually checked against themes previously given.

Phase 3.

The A/SenCo discussions.

This planned phase developed and evolved during the research into two forms. Initially they were an information gathering activity, but later developed into a 'learning conversation' and information sharing discussion. This was in response to the need to feedback to the school the findings and to raise the 'voice' of the participants in the school system.

a) The initial interviews.

These were a series of semi-structured exploratory interviews set within an information gathering framework. Here I discussed each pupil in turn with Gill (the A/SenCo) in order to gather another perspective of them from a significant and informed adult in the school.

These discussions had a semi-structured framework and script based upon the work of Measelle et al (1998), who profiled pupils' experiences and perspectives through a series of questions within the following areas,

Academic Competence

Academic Motivation

Social Competence

Peer Acceptance

Depression - Anxiety

Aggression - Hostility

Within the social competence section for example Measelle (1998) specifically considered that the following areas and questions were relevant for enquiry,

- 1) It's hard for me to make new friends. / It's not hard for me to make new friends.
- 2) I ask kids to play with me. / I don't ask kids to play with me.
- 3) If kids are playing together, I watch them. / If kids are playing together, I ask if I can play.

I prepared a series of questions using this framework of the opposing social behaviours and used them to guide my discussion with Gill. We discussed each pupil and I gathered further information about them as individuals.

For example I asked questions around the following themes,

- * whether it was hard or not hard for Michael / Daniel etc to make friends,
- * whether Danielle was able or not to ask other children to play with her and
- * whether Sarah watched children playing or asked if she could join in, etc.

I analysed our conversations for content in order to both extend and check the pupil views that I had gathered. This first level of interviews however resulted in further data being generated in terms of context rather than genuinely being an aspect of validation of my findings. They allowed me however to understand and put into a larger context the interpersonal, social and cultural aspects of the views I had collected.

Reflection following the initial interviews.

These initial interviews were exploratory in nature and were not as productive as planned in gathering further information about each pupil.

They did however form part of my professional work in supporting the staff in the special needs department.

On reflection I used them to inform the planning and structure of the next cycle of the A/SenCo phase. From this reflection there emerged a clearer purpose and methodology for a further conversation. In the dual role of researcher and professional I felt it was necessary to return and meet with Gill in order to feedback my findings and check the validity of the data. This also provided the opportunity to give the pupils a 'voice' within the school system and to search for a 'ring of truth' in my interpretation of the findings.

b) The culminating interview.

This conversation took place at my office where there were none of the interruptions or difficulties I had experienced when interviewing Gill in school. This involved setting a much clearer agenda with a focus on sharing and feeding back the pupil information rather than gathering of new data about the pupils. I felt I was also more able to be perceived in the role of a researcher rather than a generic school psychologist.

This discussion with Gill took the form of a 'learning conversation'. Norwich (1998) cites Thomas and Harri-Augstein (1979) and describes this as a process where learners are active in making sense of what and how they have learned. They are concerned with the meaning of learning to the learners. A 'learning conversation' provides the participants with the opportunity to learn where they can play two roles. Sometimes a participant can be a learner and sometimes the participant is the one who has the important information to share with others. There was an opportunity to move out of the information-giving role and become learners and sharers.

I provided Gill with an abridged copy of the themes from each pupil (Appendix 2b) for discussion and a letter (Appendix 3a) suggesting a semi

structured approach to our conversation. Erlandson (1993) describes this style of interviewing as being guided by a set of basic questions and issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions are predetermined. This is in line with a case study approach where I was able to ask Gill for her own insights into certain occurrences and was then able to use such propositions as the basis for further inquiry. We explored the participants' views of their school lives, the school understanding of the pupils as a group and whole school issues about 'listening to pupil perspectives'.

I had an expectation that I would be able to confirm or disconfirm my interpretation of the pupil data with particular examples from the individual cases. I felt this process was successful. The conversation was analysed for themes and content and a copy of the transcript is in Appendix 3.

Reflective Thoughts.

The first series of interviews used the framework from Measelle et al (1998) in a pro-active sense of information gathering, whilst the culminating interview was within a framework which evolved in an action sense and involved the sharing and 'taking back' of information. On further examination of the transcription of the second discussion I recognise places where Gill was able to reflect and come to a new understanding of individuals and their behaviours.

I also felt that I was able to come to a new and informed understanding of my findings and the impact of the research upon me both professionally and personally. I feel the process of articulating my thoughts to another person has helped to give me a new perspective on the research as a whole and thereby adding to the reflective process.

These sessions also raised the issue of how an action element could have been introduced into the research rather than just facilitating a move towards a collaborative sharing of knowledge. The evolving phase of

discussions could have included using specific aspects of each individual's perspective to inform the setting of targets on their individual education or pastoral support plans. This process would again support the 'voice' of the pupil being taken back to the school and being heard within the school system. This could then lead to informing and enlightening staff views about the pupils as individuals and as a group thereby influencing school policy and practice.

Ongoing aspects of the research.

Throughout the study there has been regular access to and involvement with a critical friend to support and challenge my thinking. This was helpful in asking them to conduct independent trials in both the categorisation of the drawings and the development of the thematic taxonomy from the personal construct conversations. This phase of asking other people 'what do they make of it' can help validate the data categorisation and the possible generalisation of the findings. This inter-rater checking was important to carry out as the researcher can become too embedded in the data and in the totality of the research experience to the point where objectivity can be compromised.

E) Analysis.

Robson (1993) discusses the subject of research analysis and considers that there should be an emphasis on the substantive or practical importance of research results rather than merely on the 'statistically significant' findings. Also that there should be a multi disciplinary approach in research which in turn leads to the 'eclectic and catholic' use of any and all designs which might prove helpful in answering the research questions. The analysis will not change the actual meaning of the data, but if appropriate choices of analyses are made the extent to which the data can be relied upon and further our understanding of a particular situation or phenomenon can be determined.

Tesch (1990) distinguished between twenty-six different kinds of approach to qualitative analysis which she reduced into the following four categories.

- * The characteristics of language.
- * The discovery of regularities.
- * The comprehension of the meaning of text or action.
- * Reflection

One form of analysis that is appropriate to the data accumulated from interview techniques is that of content analysis. This is congruent with the characteristics that Tesch (1990) cited. It is comparable with other methods of analysis that aid the development of a narrative or descriptive framework that emerges from data. Dane (1990) describes content analysis as a method of being able to study the meaning that exists in everyday communication. That is, the information contained in an interview. He also asserted that content analysis can be used to make objective and systematic inferences about theoretical messages. This assertion leads on to the two levels of analysis that operate in content analysis, that of manifest and latent content. The former refers to the face value of comments and communications made in the data collection and the latter to the underlying meaning that the content might contain.

In this process relevant events from the transcribed interviews are coded and then categorised into themes that link as in a taxonomy. All interviews, discussions and conversations were fully transcribed in this study.

Comments can fit into a category which then has sub-themes of a larger, more general category or heading. This framework enables the researcher to inform and develop the narrative that emerges from the raw comments of both manifest and latent content. This method enabled categories and sub categories to be drawn out from the data and a taxonomy of meaning to be described.

There are criticisms regarding the objectivity and reliability of using this method of analysis. Dane (1990) states that the reliability of analysing any

form of communication is subject to misunderstanding which he regarded as making reliable measurement difficult in content analysis. The use of the term measurement here might well be questioned in terms of qualitative analysis of data. However in order to minimise the researcher bias that may exist when the approach is used by one person the coding and categorising can be subject to inter-rater checks. Following this the data can be considered to have inter-rater reliability. That is, the consistency with which raters or observers make judgements.

The analysis for the pupil data was initially two fold.

Firstly the drawing data was individually analysed using the method of Furth (1986) and then thematically categorised as a group as guided by the work of Tamm (1996).

Secondly the interview data was analysed through the process of content analysis. This enabled the transcribed discussions and conversations from both Session 1 and Session 2 to be analysed for themes and constructs into a taxonomy of categories. The process took the following direction.

- * Pupil discussions were audio taped and transcribed by myself as either hand written or typed notes. See Appendix 2c for transcribed Kyli A discussion.
- * Each case was read and reread in a continual cyclical process which allowed them to be trawled for content.
- * Emerging and recurring content was entered onto a visual concept / mind map and spread at a flat or horizontal level. See appendix 5b for examples.
- * These were colour coded for themes initially using general discussion areas then by reference to phrases and specific words.

* Emerging themes were entered onto a series of grid systems which were developed as the process became more sophisticated. See Appendix 7.

* This data was further reduced into constructs and categories. From the content analysis there began to emerge a taxonomy in a hierarchical structure.

The longer A/SenCo interview was audio recorded, transcribed and analysed for content. The emerging themes were documented as opinions, thoughts and ideas.

The pupil discussions and A/SenCo interviews were all supported with hand written field notes. These provided useful references and reminders as the interviews were transcribed and analysed.

CHAPTER 4.

ANALYSIS and FINDINGS.

A) Introduction.

This chapter primarily contains the analysis and findings from the pupil drawings, the pupil conversations and the A/SenCo discussions gathered during year 2/3 of the study.

The structure used for analysing the data into category and concept formation was as follows.

- * Preliminary analysis.
- * Primary analysis.
- * Secondary analysis.

The drawings and conversations analysis are initially dealt with separately, but eventually blend as the cases are described and reflect the nature of the personal construct conversations.

The concept maps analysis are also described with examples of individual and group findings.

B) The Concept Maps.

Introduction.

The use of a concept map was an extension of the work in Year 1 where the pupils were able to contribute within a group setting to 'an ideas map' in response to the question 'why do we come to school'?

In Year 2/3 however it was considered more appropriate to use it within the individual setting to initially build rapport. However following the elicitation of a range of elements about school, they then became a platform for leading into the drawings and conversations. The elements therefore

formed the foundation for the elicitation of deeper constructs and represented the initial aspects of a personal construct approach.

The maps also provided data for each individual's view of school as well as being a contribution to a group understanding and analysis of school views. The maps of Woody, Daniel and Sheldon are located in Appendix 5b.

Individual maps.

The participants and I jointly constructed a map at the beginning of the first session. I asked them questions and then wrote and drew their elements onto a blank sheet of paper in front of us. As each participant responded I drew a spider line out from a central drawing of a building which had the word school in it. Each line led to a new theme which I numbered and then lettered as each theme became extended further.

This procedure was followed with all the participants and resulted in the construction of a personal ideas or elements map which could link to the development of constructs within a personal construct framework. For example, Woody (page 124) initially elicited the element of 'need to learn' which later became a construct of 'good pupils --- non-listeners' (Appendix 2b, page 60). Daniel elicited the elements of a range of adults in school (page 125) which he later elaborated on in terms of telling adults and specific teachers when you are unhappy and being 'bullied' (Appendix 2b, page 60).

The first phase of analysis was an overview to see if 'the map had worked' for rapport building and information gaining, followed by an individual content analysis. The mapping system allowed the construction and the elicitation of elements to be traced in a logical order through the numbering and lettering system.

For example Sheldon (Appendix 5a page 125) first elicited the theme of going to school 'to learn' (strand 1) and then going to school 'to play'

(strand 2). He then elaborated on the learning aspects by talking about specific subjects (strand 1a - reading, drawing, science, maths and english) and 'being brainy' (strand 1b). This process was followed for Sheldon's concept of play where it could be either formal as in PE and Games (2a) or informal (2b) by playing tag, through to where he could be happy playing with friends on the playground and that 'they could help you' (2c).

Daniel however elicited play as his first reason for coming to school followed by dinner and then work. His map was also dominated by the people in school who can help you. These included the head-teacher, teachers, helpers, dinner ladies, special needs helpers and a friend who he was able to specifically name. Daniel also named the places where work could take place such as the class rooms, out on trips and in the special needs 'hut'. His reference to the special needs 'helpers' and 'hut' seemed to be important features of his perspective on his school experiences.

Woody was keen to list six elements or reasons for coming to school. These ranged from the 'need to learn' through to playtime and being with people. He was also able to name particular friends. He elaborated on playtime by saying he had to stay in 'for talking' and also wanting to go home as soon as he could.

Group analysis of the maps.

A group analysis also occurred through exploring and comparing the order in which specific elements were elicited. This allowed particular themes to emerge. For example, all pupils were able to make a clear distinction between school being a place of learning where a range of basic subjects were named and as somewhere where you could be with friends during playtime.

Twelve pupils however elicited learning as the first reason for coming to school whilst Daniel was the only pupil to elicit playtime as the first.

This majority response may have been anticipated as a superficial reply to an adult's question about school. That is, children giving answers to adults that the children think the adults want to hear. However this aspect of learning as being at the forefront of children's thinking was noticeably absent in the personal construct drawings and conversations which I feel were able to elicit constructs at a deeper and more meaningful level. Ravenette (1997) refers to this process of going beyond the superficial responses as 'transcending the obvious and illuminating the ordinary'.

Other group themes to emerge were that all pupils were able to talk about the concept of friends describing them as being people who would help you, who you could trust and be happy playing with. Also Daniel, Kyli W and Ricky in particular made specific reference to the 'special needs hut' as a place for getting help and support from adults and as a place for 'alternative play'.

Conclusion.

The pupils were able to follow and enter positively into the activity and certainly had a view about school and wanted to express that view. On reflection however there were indications of some limited expressive language abilities and restricted 'emotional' vocabulary when asked to describe or elaborate on their views.

The process of eliciting the concept map therefore served as an exercise to build rapport, to produce a platform for the personal construct drawings and conversations which were to follow. They also provided information or data in their own right which could be analysed.

C) The Drawings as Data.

Introduction and overview.

Drawing examples are in Appendix 1.

The analysis for the drawing collection followed the method of Tamm (1996) who uses the term phenomenographic to describe how this approach can give rise to two types of evidence. Firstly there is the development of descriptive categories which are qualitatively distinct conceptions being expressed about the phenomenon in question. These are distinctly qualitative in nature and describe the different conceptions the pupils have of their experiences of education. This is shown initially within the superordinate categories selected and latterly within the subsequent subordinate emerging categories. Secondly the data can also be expressed in a quantitative nature by showing the distribution of study subjects over these categories. That is, how often the concepts were expressed.

Fifty drawings were collected from thirteen pupils. These were analysed individually and then thematically categorised as a group. There was an attempt to revisit and refine data until non overlapping categories appear. This naturally was not always possible, but is a justifiable aim in qualitative analysis.

The Process of Drawing Analysis.

Preliminary Analysis.

First impressions were gained by viewing all data at one sitting. The sets of drawings were named, numbered (eg D,1,2,3 and 4) and titled. All drawings were titled by the drawer either by writing it on the picture or verbally to myself. At this stage I considered whether I had achieved the task I had set myself and asked the following questions. Had the pupils been able to enter into the research and contribute at this stage? Had I collected a series of drawings from the participants which reflected their views of themselves in school? Had I adhered to the code of ethics which promoted the concept of informed consent and respect for co participants in research?

The vast majority of pupils were able to convey their feelings about school via their drawings, although some found the exercise difficult. Mason for

example found it hard to represent his thoughts, but was eventually encouraged to produce four useable pictures. Woody despite being a more able pupil in class seemed reluctant to express himself, possibly either being self conscious about drawing or cautious about showing his feelings. Those drawings which appeared to reflect the pupil's difficulty in engaging with the task were noted.

Primary Analysis.

At this stage each drawing was considered in its entirety. Themes began to emerge and tentative superordinate categories were considered. The total meaning expressed by the drawing was initially used as the content of the category. A grid system was used to record information and thoughts about each drawing (See Appendix 7 Table 4 - Individual Theme Sorting and Analysis). The following aspects were noted. The location of the scene, what activity was occurring, who was included and what was being said by any characters etc. This analytical procedure successfully gave rise to a number of content orientated categories, each of which was qualitatively different from the others. These categories were then systematically and hierarchically analysed into the superordinate categories of Where, Activity occurring and Emotional message expressed. This is shown in Table 4.1, page 100.

Drawings which seemed to not fit comfortably into an emerging category were eventually recorded as unclassified. This was as high as 6 drawings in the initial superordinate category of 'Emotional Message Expressed' (positive / negative -Table 4.1, page 100) and as low as 2 in the subordinate category of Emotional message expressed and Location (inside / outside - Table 4.3, page 101). These pupils may have felt uncomfortable at expressing their 'voice' through the medium of drawings or found the questions I was asking to be poorly constructed or difficult to answer. My initial question of 'draw a picture of yourself in school' may have been too open ended and lacked sufficient structure for them to understand the task. Also they may not have been used to being asked to draw freely or to

express their opinions or emotions and so may have been unfamiliar with this sort of activity. Nevertheless, the location of a drawing in an unclassified category did not preclude it from being used in supporting the subsequent discussion with the pupil about their world.

The tally grid system was then used to record the number of times a certain category occurred. This process of categorisation was initially informed by the analysis from year 1, but was developed in its own right each time the current data was revisited.

Any supporting dialogue or comments written onto the drawing were also recorded in the grid analysis of each picture. See Sarah D2 (Sad Things), and Kyli,A D2 (When people call me names). The majority of written language within the pictures was merely labelling and rarely represented true conversation or dialogue. This was in comparison to the drawings from year 1 where there was frequent supporting written language and dialogue.

An emerging theme in this research was that the participants did have a view and wanted to express it, but appeared to be somewhat limited in their ability to express themselves verbally and with written supporting dialogue. This may reflect a low level of basic expressive language skills in some pupils. It may also be however that they lack the opportunity and experience of being asked to express their views and being encouraged to talk about their experiences. They may therefore not only lack the language skills and opportunity to talk, but also lack an equality of opportunity which might be given to pupils who are or are perceived to be more articulate. The context of the school in this study may also be an influencing factor in this respect.

Certain sensitive issues such as bullying in the form of verbal name calling (Kyli,A D2) and physical aggression (Daniel D1, Kimberley D1 and Ricky D2), loneliness (Michael D1) and deliberate isolation from the peer group

(Sarah D2) were raised which necessitated quick feedback to the school and this was done through the first A/SenCo interviews following each pupil session.

Initially the drawings were viewed as a series drawn by each participant, then all together as a whole group. They were visually available all the time which allowed me to gain an overall sense of the mass of material and to develop a style of thinking and feeling which immersed itself totally in the data. Prosser (1998) talks about 'living' with the data to develop this style. It was necessary however to note which individual drawings appeared to offer greater content and interest in order to develop hypotheses about the pupil's lives and therefore aid the further conversations planned for each pupil.

Secondary Analysis.

Each time the data was revisited further themes emerged which led to the analysis at a secondary or subordinate category level. This examined the 'people or person' content of the drawings and emerged from the feeling that life in school for the majority of pupils was about people and relationships in social or unstructured situations rather than learning in the traditional classroom didactic sense. This categorisation is shown in Table 4.2 on page 101.

For example it was considered that if peers and/or teachers were included in the picture, what was the purpose of their presence and what influence were they exerting? It was also apparent that no matter how many categories emerged there would always be anomalies in certain drawings which required a miscellaneous or unclassified category.

Some drawings were produced which were not set in school and were not about school matters (eg, Danielle D4, Kyli W D4, Daniel D4 and Sarah D4). These drawings nevertheless still supported and facilitated the discussion sessions and allowed pupils to express their views and to talk

about their experiences on such matters as relationships, social interactions and being included or excluded from a group.

Further reduction of data led to an exploration of the categories of positive and negative experiences and whether these occurred in either inside or outside locations and in either formal or informal situations. This data is shown in Table 4.3 on page 101.

These subsequent categories supported the primary analysis, but also raised a number of questions. That is, informal or social situations could be either positive or negative, they could also be either inside or outside and they might or might not include peers. Furthermore outside informal pictures only included two adults in the form of a lunch time supervisor and an adult present during a family beach activity. Why were no teachers present in any of the drawings in informal situations? Why were pictures about formal learning in the minority (13) compared with pictures in social settings which seem to dominate (32)? Why did teachers appear in only 6 pictures whilst learning without teachers being present was shown in 4 pictures. Why was there only one picture which actually showed a pupil with a teacher and the overt statement of being 'happy in maths' (Sarah D1). These questions could justify a more complex cross-reference analysis in themselves in possible further research, but appeared useful at this level to inform the discussion.

Group Findings from the drawings.

The primary superordinate findings as shown in Table 4.1, page 100 are as follows.

- * More than two thirds of the pictures were outside, all of which were of informal unstructured situations.
- * Just less than a third (15) of pictures were portrayed as being inside. Of these 13 were of formal lesson situations.
- * Just less than two thirds of pictures (31) were considered to show a positive experience in school, whilst 13 showed negative experiences.

The secondary or subordinate findings using the people present as a theme as shown in Table 4.2, page 101 are as follows,

- * Some pictures contained people in more than one category. Eg teachers and peers.
- * Families were shown only in informal situations outside of school.
- * Teachers were only shown in formal teaching / learning situations.
- * No pictures contained learning support assistants, although one picture contained an ancillary lunch time support assistant who also happened to be the mother of the pupil drawing the picture (Danielle, D2).
- * Another non teaching adult was present in a supervisory type capacity in a family outing to the beach. This was Danielle's mother again in D4.
- * Pictures showing lone figures were acknowledged as being the drawer with one exception. These were,
Michael - D1, sitting alone without friends.
Danielle - D1, 'I fell sad'.
Kyli, A. - D1, 'happy in the special needs hut'.
Daniel - D2, 'alone in the sand jump pit' and D4, 'setting a trap'.
Gareth - D2, 'at the fair' and D3 'learning' at a table.
Woody - D3, 'a man shouting help'.
Kyli, A. - D4, 'I like to learn'.

The exception to the lone figure being the drawer was Kyli, W D2 of 'Mrs know all' depicting her sister who I feel Kyli resented and was jealous of both at home and at school.

- * Not all formal learning situations (13 pictures) contained teachers. Teachers were shown in only six pictures.
- * Some classroom situations showed the pupil studying alone (5) or with friends (2).
- * When peers were shown (26 pictures) the majority were the same gender as the drawer except for two pictures produced by Sheldon of 'his girlfriend'.
- * Five pictures in learning situations had no teacher present. These were, Kyli, (W) D1 and D2, Kyli, (A) D1 and D4 and Gareth D3.

Further secondary analysis and category reduction of the emotional message expressed in the picture into the subordinate categories of inside / outside and formal / informal is shown in Table 4.3, page 101. Findings from this data were as follows. Some pictures were however still not classifiable at this level of abstraction.

- * Positive experiences were found more often by far in outside situations (25) and in those which were informal. This compared with only some eight drawings which showed positive experiences being inside and in formal situations.

- * Negative experiences tended to be more evenly spread across inside and outside locations. Whereas nearly twice as many negative experiences occurred in informal compared with formal situations.

The Drawing Themes in Table Form.

The themes that initially emerged from the group drawing analysis were,

- * where the drawing was set (situations / locations).
- * activities that were occurring (behaviours /events).
- * the emotional message conveyed in the picture. This was confirmed by the pupil giving it a title and saying how the main person in the picture was feeling. These are shown in Table 4.1 on page 100.

Further analysis and categorisation led to exploring the types of people who were included (or excluded) from the pictures. This data is shown in Table 4.2 on page 101.

A third reduction of data examined the location (inside/outside) and the occasion (formal/informal) with regard to what type of emotional message (positive/negative) was conveyed. This is shown in Table 4.3 on page 101.

Conclusion.

The analysis was developed in conjunction with the participants who through initial and subsequent discussions confirmed the picture locations, behaviours depicted and emotional content. This supported my view that

research should be participant led, child centred, relativist and reflect the views or constructions of the individual. Returning to talk with the participants and allowing them to revisit their drawings and their interpretations of them was a planned phase of the research which emerged from the feedback and reflection following year 1. The analysis of the individual drawings and the series of drawings collected from each pupil both informed and supported the subsequent individual pupil conversations. The group data was also useful in helping to frame questions when discussing group situations.

Table 4.1

Table to show the frequency of drawings within initial categories for all the drawings collected. These were categorised by myself and then by a colleague to contribute to reliability. Inter rater frequencies are shown in brackets. Fifty drawings were categorised as follows.

Category.	Frequency.
Where. (Situations / Locations)	
Outside	32 (33)
Inside	15 (13)
Unclassified	3 (4)
Activity. (Behaviour / Events)	
Informal / Unstructured time	32 (33)
Formal / Lesson time	13 (12)
Unclassified	5 (5)
Emotional Message Expressed.	
Positive, eg happy, smiling, enjoying.	31 (29)
Negative, eg sad, hurt, angry etc.	13 (13)
Unclassified	6 (8)

Table 4.2

Table to show subsequent categorisation of drawings using the theme of people depicted in the pictures.

Category.	Frequency.
People.	
Peers	26
Family (parent/s and siblings)	6
Lone figures (not always the drawer)	14
School staff (teachers and ancillaries)	8
Unclassified	4

Table 4.3

Table to show the relationship between emotions expressed (as confirmed by the drawer), their location and the prevailing social (informal) / learning (formal) atmosphere as depicted in the drawings. Only those drawings allocated a category in Table 1 were used.

Category.	Emotional Message Expressed.		
	Positive	Negative	unclassified
Inside	8	5	2
Outside	25	6	1
Formal	8	4	1
Informal	24	7	1

D) The Pupil Conversational Data.

Introduction.

The cases of Michael, Danielle, Kyli W and Daniel are selected as examples to show the process of the elicitation of constructs and themes from our conversations. They are considered to reflect the analysis of the remainder of the cases which are located in Appendix 2a and 2b in a reduced and abridged form. The personal construct psychology conversation with Kyli A is shown in full in Appendix 2c as I feel this together with Sarah was one of the most productive conversations in the research.

The participants were interviewed twice. Initial discussions took place during the drawing session and subsequently in the following personal construct conversation session. Each interview was transcribed and analysed for recurrent themes. As dominant themes emerged from the individual cases, the data was then considered as a whole. Whole group themes led to the development of an emerging conceptual system as seen in the taxonomy of pupil views, Diagram 4.4 on page 126. Each case was then sampled against the group themes to see whether they confirmed or disconfirmed the category.

Individual Case Examples.

MICHAEL.

Introduction and background.

Michael was a ten year old pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs which recorded that he had severely delayed expressive and receptive language and a global cognitive delay. He subsequently transferred in year 7 to a special school designated as appropriate for pupils who have a mild or moderate learning difficulty.

Session 1.

Drawings, descriptions and conversations.

The initial session with Michael enabled me to collect three drawings of him in a school situation. The drawings were produced following a rapport

building exercise where we co-constructed a 'concept map' of school. This activity was in response to my open-ended questions about school which tried to elaborate on the affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects of relationships, people, interactions, occasions, situations and events etc.

Michael was then asked to draw a picture of himself in school and he produced (D1) which he entitled 'Sad, Upset and Bullying you'.

This contained a single featureless person sitting on a rock facing away from a large leafy tree. The figure which Michael said was himself, is alone and facing a number of playground activities such as swings, slide and a seesaw. No other people are included, there are no language or verbal labels and there are large expanses of plain sky. Many aspects are heavily shaded. Michael described this scene as a person who likes to be alone and to be able to stay away from the 'bullies' because at school 'you get bullied' and 'big kids bash you down in the playground'. Michael said that bullies name call and 'call me a girl.... they make me feel upset and hurt'.

Michael was then asked to draw a second picture which was the opposite of the first title and description he gave. This was rephrased in terms of being different from D1 or 'not being sad, upset or bullied'. He then drew D2 and titled it 'Happy' and again volunteered a description of the content, what was happening and the people present.

In D2 Michael is 'happy and has lots of friends' and he described the scene as 'me and my friends playing football.....at dinner time'. He is happy playing football outside with the 'clouds, birds and trees'. He portrayed a strong sense that he knows and needs to know where the dinner ladies are. Michael explained that you make friends by playing with them and that 'you play with them ... them play with you'. Michael described a difference between D1 and D2 as being 'sad upset and bullying you' compared with 'happy when you have got loads of friends'.

Michael was then asked to complete a third picture of any situation in school. He drew D3 which showed him in class with a friend having a Maths lesson. He then described the situation as being in class with his friend and learning.

Session 2.

The PCP conversation.

I returned to see Michael later that term and engaged him in a discussion and conversation about his school experiences. Here I used the drawings to support the triadic comparison and Landfield (1971) characterisation methods to help us have a joint learning conversation. Michael remembered all his pictures and gave them their original titles. We again discussed each picture in turn.

For D1 Michael described the scene as sitting down on his own alone and as 'me alone in the playground'. He continued that the picture was 'a person with no friends' who also gets upset when his friends play with other people or someone else.

For D3 Michael described the scene as being happy with his friends, especially when 'my friends sit with me (in class)'. He continued to say that a happy person was funny and a friend is someone who lets 'me sit near him at dinner time' and 'he makes me feel happy when he lets me sit near him'. This is also a scene where Michael is doing his work and having fun.

Following these descriptions I asked Michael to compare the pictures for similarities and differences. He initially found this activity difficult and tended to stay at a concrete or surface level by describing the directly observable or behavioural aspects of each drawing. He was initially unable to offer any information at a deeper psychological level where there was direct reference to any affective or cognitive aspects in the picture. He talked about his drawings as follows.

He again saw himself in D1 as wanting to be alone and away from people who 'bullied him', but also as a person who had no friends. When asked to elaborate on what sort of people had no friends he replied, 'upset ... alone ... no friends ... and ... not playing with someone else'. His initial responses tended to be only one or two word answers and my questions needed to be sensitively scaffolded to encourage him to talk without leading him, making assumptions or answering for him.

When asked for the opposite of or different from having 'no friends' Michael replied 'friend' and elaborated by saying 'Happy, funny ... lets sit near (lets you sit near them) and dinner and lesson (during lesson and dinner time)'.

Michael then described D2 as a scene where he and his friends were playing football outside. He saw a similarity between D1 and D2 as both being outside, but a definite difference between being happy in D2 and sad in D1. Michael began to engage better with the activity and explained that in D1 he was sitting down and sad, but was thinking about who should he play with. Whilst in D2 he was happy playing, doing things, thinking again and having fun.

I felt at this time it was possible to consider that Michael had elicited his construct of being sad and happy.

In order to explore this further I asked Michael to try to see the pictures from the perspective or viewpoint of a third person and introduced the idea of how a significant adult such as the head teacher might see them. Michael replied that he thought the head would see the person in D1 as 'sad and no one to play with' and in D2 as 'happy and playing together 'cos they're playing football together ... being with your friends' and 'having fun with my friends'.

I then asked Michael to compare D2 and D3. Again he began at a superficial level and described the differences as outside on the playing field and inside in the classroom. He saw a similarity as himself being in both pictures. Further exploration led to Michael describing D3 as work inside the classroom and D2 as play outside with friends. I felt that Michael had elicited another construct by making a distinction between work and play.

I followed this line of thinking and asked Michael to elaborate further. He described work as doing work sheets and copying words whilst play tended to be 'fun with friends'. However Michael thought that it was possible to have fun at work and play and said that both pictures could be similar and different at the same time.

We returned to look at all the pictures and Michael was able to recognise that he has provided much greater detail in D3 with fuller figures, faces, bodies and heads that were easily recognisable as such compared with D1 and D2 where there were only stick figures with heavily blacked out faces.

A reflective thought might be that Michael saw himself and others as having a more obvious identity when in the classroom but tended to be somewhat anonymous when in outside situations. It might have been useful to ask him about the similarities and differences in his drawing style as an aid to deeper meanings and understandings about his experiences.

The conversation stopped briefly at this point and there was a short silence. I reintroduced D1 and D2 and Michael continued his descriptions which confirmed his earlier thoughts that D1 is being sad with one person sitting and D2 being happy with lots of people standing and running around.

I tried to dig deeper and link to his previous explorations and raise the themes of 'friends' and 'not friends'. Michael expanded on friends as 'nice ... play ... come with you to house, classroom, hall and play football' whilst

'not friends' was being 'not your friends ... pick on you ... name calling ... push, hit and not play with you'. Again I pressed for the construct of work and not work and Michael elaborated that work 'is good and nice and is ok, because in here (D3) you get help and other kids get help specially when someone gets stuck, help is when teacher goes over and writes down stuff' and not work as 'people are nasty to you ... Matthew ... horrible to you, picking on you, naughty and don't do his work'. Michael appeared to become more engaged in our conversation and I felt was characterising the type of people who work and don't work in class. This was probably the longest elaboration that Michael made.

I tried to extend this theme of work and play and ask for Michael's understanding of 'not play'. He talked about play involving friends, having fun and being together, whilst 'not play' was having no fun.

Eventually after almost an hour Michael began to lose interest and our conversation stopped. At this point he actually asked to do another drawing and volunteered two new pictures. These were a cartoon character of a bulldog and a much fuller picture (D4) entitled 'Friends' which was of himself ('me') and Tom plus two other figures in front of school on a sunny day with lots of clouds. This was his most complete drawing to date in relation to drawing the human figure and showed relatively good detail in relation to his previous pictures. D4 allowed Michael to complete a picture which showed him playing outside with his brother and friends (Chris and Leanne) where they were playing football outside the school. When Michael stopped drawing he also stopped answering my questions and the session ended. I felt that this culminating drawing allowed Michael to continue his themes of friends, playing together, being with other people and seeing school as important.

From our work I felt Michael showed an ability to discriminate between the following.

- * Friends and not friends.

Friends - You can have fun with friends in a range of situations which are both indoors (work) and outdoors (football). Friends are people who 'be nice to you ... play with you ... come with me, come with us to my house', and that this can also be in such places as the hall (during assemblies) and in the classroom. They let you sit beside them at dinner time and at lesson time. Michael emphasised the importance of friends when he said they play football together (outside) and when they are like people who sit and work with you (inside). They help you to be happy by playing together.

'Not friends' were people who 'pick on you, call me names ... push me, hit me' and that they would not play with you. They can cause you to be upset and alone. When you have no friends then your friends are playing with someone else and this can cause you to be upset. People who are not happy tend to have no one to play with, can often be sitting down and sad and thinking about who they would like to be playing with.

* Workers and not workers.

Workers - Michael described people who work with you as workers and as 'they're good, nice, they help other kids, help if someone is stuck, to help them answer and that they write stuff down for me'.

'Not work / not workers' he felt were people who were nasty to you and he saw Matthew as someone who can be 'horrible to you and pick on you and that'. He said that the deputy head teacher would think 'he's (Matthew) naughty and doesn't write anything'. Michael continued, but mostly at the one and two word level and said the following 'nasty to you ... horrible ... pick on ... naughty ... don't do work ... chuck papers ... keep on ... mucking about ... and noisy'.

Play was seen as being fun with friends and can occur both indoors and outside. Work was about doing work sheets and copying words.

I felt that Michael had told me about a range of his experiences in school and I concluded by encouraging him to complete the following sentence. People who play have ... 'friends' ... and they feel like they are having ... 'fun' and doing things ... 'together'. In response to being asked to describe people who 'not play' he said they were 'not having lots of fun with their friends'.

On reflection I felt that our conversations have helped Michael to elicit the following constructs of,

Friends - Not Friends. (People who pick on you).

Work - Not Work. (Does not write anything).

Work - Play. (Have fun with friends).

Happy - Sad. (No one to play with).

Play - Not Play. (Not having fun with friends).

Michael's constructs of friends and not-friends seemed to transcend school and home and the classroom and the playground.

DANIELLE.

Introduction and Background.

Danielle was a ten-year-old girl who was on the special needs register due to school concerns regarding her behaviour. These included having difficulty relating to her peers where she can physically bully them, being verbally challenging to some of her teachers and also being physically dangerous in the classroom (eg throwing things, pushing over tables etc). She was also receiving counselling through the child and family therapeutic service due to her sexualised behaviour in the playground and accusations of abuse at home.

Session 1.

Danielle was asked to produce a drawing of herself in school following our joint construction of the school 'concept' map. Her first drawing (D1) was a single figure alone inside the school building which she titled as 'At

school how we fell ... I fell sad' (I feel sad). She described this picture as sad alone inside and being unable to play outside due to the rain. In the picture she was 'stuck' inside during wet playtime and would rather be outside having fun playing hide and seek. She felt it would be 'ok'ish' playing games in the classroom when not allowed out, but would prefer to be outside playing with other people.

Her second drawing (D2) required her to produce a 'not sad' picture and showed a group of five pupils playing outside in the open air with the sun shining. Danielle described it as showing her playing with her sister at dinner time and that Danielle's mum who was a playground assistant was present as depicted by the larger central figure. Children were playing outside and when one girl hurt her leg she got help from the playground assistant (Danielle's mum). Danielle saw herself as playing with her friends. She was glad to be happy outside rather than being stuck indoors when it was raining. She elaborated on this as she drew by saying she was not sad, but happy at being able to play outside and feeling happy with others. She titled this second drawing as 'I fell happy' (I feel happy).

D3 was made as the session came to a close and Danielle was happy to draw a picture which she described as her feeling 'alright indoors', but waiting again for the rain to stop. The scene was in the school library with two figures looking out through a window. She was happy being with a friend who had got a bad arm. This third picture had no restrictions put on it other than just to do another picture of herself in school, depicted two figures in a school building. One figure was smiling whilst the other had a sad face and one arm shorter than the other. Danielle's title for this was 'I fell juded ritet' (I feel just right). She initially described this as feeling ok and being inside with a person with a bad arm.

The discussion during this first session was initially at a concrete or superficial level in terms of the content of the drawings and involved little in-depth discussion regarding deeper meanings. The initial element of 'sad'

and the different element 'not sad' or 'happy' emerged together with the constructs associated with these elements.

Session 2.

I returned to meet with Danielle again some three months later and was able to engage her in a PCP discussion regarding her drawings. She remembered all her drawings and read their titles straight off without prompting.

We started with D1 which Danielle again described as 'unhappy cos its raining and having to stay indoors'. She blamed the rain for causing her to be stuck indoors, being unhappy and alone in the school building.

In D2 however she said she was happy with the sun shining. Here she was playing outside with her friends, being allowed out to play and liking it. There were 'lots' of children outside (four other children) with an adult supporting / helping / supervising outside on the football field. One child was on her own separate from the rest of the group and Danielle thinks this figure is 'alone (isolated) and looking for and trying to find a friend'. She said that the scene was taking place outside of school time, probably at the lunch time or end of the day.

At this point I tried to elicit the construct of what being a friend meant to Danielle. She explained that they were 'nice to you, let you sleep at their house and stay for tea'. I asked about bring friends in school and Danielle commented that they let you have some of their dinner. I asked if this was like sharing and Danielle replied 'yes play together and help you with your work'.

I asked if a teacher can help and also be a friend and Danielle responded that teachers can give help but cannot be considered a friend, because they 'tell you off'. I returned to this idea of 'friend' and 'not-friend'. Danielle replied to a 'not-friend' as someone who was nasty to you, they say they

don't want to help you and 'won't let you sleep over'. Again I tried to talk about friends and not-friends in school. Danielle thought that a 'not-friend' in school was someone who 'says no' when you ask them for help. They might fall out because they might 'beat me up at playtime and they shouldn't'. Danielle elaborated on this aspect by saying two pupils are 'having a scrap' in D2 and mum was coming over 'to break it up, send em to bed and give em a smack'. This drawing has now taken on a different meaning and seemed to depict a scene which was out of school. Danielle appeared to be using the drawings freely to support her thoughts about her experiences and in particular how friendships exist both in and out of school.

Following this we moved to look at D1 and D3 and seek some similarities. Danielle again described D1 as sad because it's raining and D3 as a sad figure with a bad arm with both pictures being inside the school buildings. When asked if there was anything missing in the pictures she said that there was no teacher in D1, but that the person with a bad arm has now become a teacher. She described the scene as the teacher having hurt their arm, 'she doesn't like it and is being laughed at by the pupil standing beside her'. D3 therefore had also taken on a new description now as the original unhappy pupil has now become an unhappy teacher.

We then looked at D2 and D3. Danielle again saw D2 as happy outside in the sun and D3 as unhappy inside, especially the person with the bad arm. She also pointed out that the unhappy D3 had no sun in it.

At this point Danielle talked freely about D2 where she referred to the pupils as 'working like a team', 'like cooperation' and compared this with D1 and D3 which were 'not being like a team'. I focussed on this theme of team and asked Danielle to explain more about her understanding of team and not-team. I asked her what sort of people are in a team and Danielle responded 'really really nice and they want to be in the same team'. She continued that being with nice people is an important part of being in a team

and you can feel happy when in a team. I introduced a third person viewpoint and asked what the head teacher would think about people in a team and Danielle replied that 'he'd say that they were working together and working as a team'. She felt that this was important and said,

"That's important working as a couple in cooperation
all working togetherall friends as well,yes
working together and being friends".

In response to my question about what sort of people don't work together, Danielle replied 'nasty people' and quoted her teacher who said that nasty people really don't like one another and would not be working as a team. This would be because 'one of em would be beating up the other in the playground, yeah fighting, fighting', (Danielle's interpretation of her teacher's thoughts on the subject).

I steered the conversation back to how friends might be perceived in the classroom or in lessons and Danielle recalled that people who were not friends would be nasty and sometimes beat you up in the playground. She agreed that friends in lessons were the sorts of people in D2 where they were all working together outside, but that there can also be times when people are working together inside. She elaborated freely by referring to the head teacher who would be able to 'sort out' any 'not friends' situations by 'asking them to be friends', 'ringing their mum' and 'sending a letter home'. The head would prefer pupils 'to be friends, where they were working together and working in cooperation'.

At this point Danielle spontaneously asked to do another drawing (D4) and gave it the title of 'I feel like cooperation'. She described her picture as she drew saying that it was at the seaside where people were playing on the rocks with some people being scared to walk across some narrow rocks. Danielle continued to add figures as she drew and talked. She said that all the people wanted to meet together and that there was one adult present in

order to 'keep an eye on them.....in case they fall'. This may be similar to the presence of the adult in D2 who was also in a supervisory capacity.

Danielle took the opportunity of using her latest and last drawing to move to a situation of 'draw and tell'. The scene she had created was about a group of children who all wanted to meet up and play together. However one person was stuck and 'someone or other' needs to climb up and 'grab him' and help him get back to the rest of the group. He was collecting strawberries and was going to share them as Danielle said 'like cooperation'.

I asked Danielle to expand on this aspect of cooperation and she again introduced the idea of sharing. She described people who share as 'nice people' and said that 'grown ups' can share. She felt that if she shared with friends then she may be able to 'sleep over' and stay round their house. I tried to bring the conversation back to school and the theme of sharing and Danielle said that 'if you don't share then people won't be your friend so it's good to share, and that if you don't share then people ... then people won't share back with you'.

At this point Danielle reflected on all four drawings and said that people are sharing in D2 ('I fell happy' - I feel happy) and D4 ('I full like co-prachn' - I feel like cooperation / cooperating). The interview then drew to a close and I felt that Danielle's fourth drawing had given her a chance to depict certain important themes which had been present in her other drawings and our conversations. This I felt confirmed her thoughts on the importance of friends, teamwork and cooperation.

Emerging themes and constructs,

Cooperation / Sharing and Not Cooperating.

Working together in a team and not being part of a team.

Happy playing outside and Unhappy indoors when not allowed out to play.

People behave in groups when outside

Relationships and friendships are central to her life.

Friends play together, help and share whilst Not Friends fight.

KYLI, W.

Introduction and background.

Kyli was aged ten and included on the special needs register for emotional, social and behavioural concerns. She produced three drawings in her first session and was happy to revisit them when we next met. In fact like a number of the participants she seemed to thrive on the attention and asked on a number of occasions when would I be seeing her again. This may well have been in order to avoid the normal routines of the school day, eg specific lessons rather than wanting to develop the research further, but did reflect a sense that pupils enjoyed the opportunity to talk about themselves and their school experiences.

Session 1.

Kyli was keen to jointly construct the concept map and once the idea of what she enjoyed in school was reached she moved easily into the drawing exercise. Her first drawing (D1) she titled 'The special needs hut ... I feel happy' and showed her sitting alone and engaged in a table top activity which she described as doing 'what's missing'.

In response to being asked to draw a 'not feeling happy' situation Kyli produced D2 which showed her younger sister standing on a chair with her hand up and answering a question in class. Kyli volunteered her description and title of 'Mrs know all' and added the following written comments of nasty, angry, unhappy and 'spietful' (spiteful).

When asked to complete a third drawing (D3) without reference to any of her previous work Kyli produced a picture of Father Christmas with a sack of toys. She liberally added a range of words to indicate a 'happy and nice to be with' situation, eg 'enjoyable, excited, jenres (generous) and happy'.

Session 2.

From the PCP discussion Kyli clearly distinguished between herself as being happy playing alone (D1) and being angry with her sister who was 'ruining her life' by being a 'nasty know it all'(D2). Kyli felt you could be happy to be with 'nice kids', but angry with people who are naughty and make you angry.

You could be happy playing with friends in the special needs hut, but would be angry and resentful of her sister who she called 'knowledgeable and miss know it all' (D2). She describing her as getting people (Kyli) into trouble at home.

Kyli appeared to be a very angry person as she continued to talk about how her sister had 'ruined her life' and openly stated that 'I feel unhappy cos she knows everything'. Kyli said that she has to share a bedroom with her sister but would not share a classroom or playtime together.

When asked to suggest how things might be better between Kyli and her sister, Kyli said she would 'kill her sister ... get her to go to another school ... go to a different home ... she makes home and school unhappy.....home is worse ... and put her in a home'.

I returned to the idea of someone who was 'naughty' and asked Kyli to elaborate further and she described this as someone who would 'kick and punch, would ruin other people's work and would run around the classroom'. She freely continued to say that she would like to ruin her sister's work, particularly her poetry.

When discussing D3 the theme of being happy came out again. Father Christmas would be bringing toys for 'nice children' who are nice to be with, whilst 'not nice' people are angry and 'have their temper off at other people' and 'punch em' (punch other people) and would not receive presents.

The main themes that came out in discussing the similarities and differences between D1, D2 and D3 were that you could be happy in the special needs 'hut' where people are generous and 'happy to be with', whilst you would be unhappy with such people as 'miss know it all' (Kyli's sister) who could be a nasty person in the classroom and who was always answering questions. Kyli felt that nasty people 'nick or steal stuff off other children, are jealous of people and can be ungrateful and angry'.

Kyli saw a distinction between herself being alone, wanting to be on her own and have her own way as opposed to her sister who was liked by teachers and pupils (ie not alone) and as someone who had everything. She described people who have everything as 'horrible, nasty and angry' as opposed to people who were 'not spiteful'. Kyli continued this theme of resentment of her sister by responding to being asked how things could get better by saying either 'Kyli goes' or her 'sister goes'.

Kyli was happy to produce a fourth picture (D4) which she described as her mum and dad seeing her sister as a 'good girl' who would rather be playing with her brothers than playing with herself. In the picture Kyli has drawn herself as a smaller figure in the background of a family group with her sister being drawn as a larger and more prominent member of the group.

Concluding Thoughts.

Themes that emerge for Kyli from our conversations were as follows.

- * Being happy in the Special Needs Hut, but playing on her own.
- * Her sister 'knowing it all' in the classroom.
- * She saw herself as being alone, but would like to be playing with other people where she was able to 'give and receive'.
- * Her sister is never alone, always has friends, has toys and people to play and share with. Kyli could be jealous of her sister 'because Tony and Chris (her brothers) like ... (sister) more than me'.
- * She defined being jealous as 'they've got something that you want'.

* She wanted her sister to be jealous of her when she took biscuits home from school.

* She expanded on this theme of being jealous as follows. A jealous person was a person who was 'angry, nasty and steals off other people'. Being 'not jealous' was seen as being happy, nice and generous. When I asked if she knew anyone who was not a very nice person, she described herself. This may have reflected the opportunity for Kyli to look at herself during the drawings and our conversations.

* There seemed to be a deep resentment between Kyli and her sister where she described her as getting Kyli into trouble, telling on me, by telling mum, mum grounds me and smacks me. Kyli felt she used to get her own way when she was small, but now she (younger sister) gets her own way. 'She does things I'm not allowed to do, annoying me and getting away with it'.

* Kyli described how she would turn her sister into a nicer person by changing her to a person 'that shares stuff ... that you get to play with ... doesn't be spiteful ... that's not angry, not nasty and not unhappy'.

Despite Kyli's resentment and jealousy of her sister she was eventually able to offer a number of ways which might help to improve or change the situation. Her final drawing D4, however still showed herself as a lesser figure in the family dynamics with her sister being portrayed as more important in her parents eyes. Kyli concluded the session by saying 'they say she's a good girl' and that her brothers prefer to play with her sister 'Chris wants to play with ...(sister)'.

I felt Kyli had used the opportunities to draw and talk primarily about her relationships in general and in particular about her resentment and jealousy of her sister which transcended both school and home.

DANIEL.

Introduction and Background.

I first met Daniel when he was referred to me through my generic work. He was considered by school staff to have learning difficulties and a high level of social and emotional need. Daniel was ten years old and received a statement during the research period and transferred at the end of year 6 to a small school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

Daniel appeared to be a rather sad and unhappy young boy who seemed somewhat emotionally 'flat' during my initial contact with him. He was often dirty and unkempt, came to school without breakfast and seemed to be in the special needs department every time I visited both during lesson and play time.

Session 1.

During the concept map construction Daniel talked about being sad and missing his 'old friend' who had moved to another school. Much of our talk was about going to the special needs hut when things were 'not nice' for him in school especially when he felt he got bullied.

Daniel's first drawing (D1) about himself in school was of two anonymous basic stick figures, outside under a tree with one crying and the other appearing to make contact with him. Daniel said it was himself in the picture being hit in an unhappy situation. He titled it 'Unhappy and being bullied'.

Daniel responded to being asked for a 'not being bullied' picture by drawing a happy smiley stick figure in the school playing field long jump pit (D2), which he titled 'happy and on my own'.

Daniel's third drawing (D3) was produced in response to being asked to draw just another picture of yourself in school. This was without any reference to the two previous drawings. Here Daniel turned the drawing

into an opportunity to tell a story. He described a situation where he was setting a trap for a person called Douggie who had bullied him. This theme was continued as Daniel produced D4 which showed him constructing 'a double tree trap ... for Douggie'. Daniel was happy to draw and talk during this session.

Session 2.

Daniel was happy to meet and talk about his drawings in session 2. From our conversation the following themes, ideas and constructs were elicited. For Daniel school was a place where you get bullied during playtime when you play outside with other people (D1). If you play outside on your own then you can run and jump and have fun (D2). There are some times when you can play outside with a friend when things are ok such as playing hide and seek (D3).

Daniel initially appeared to have some difficulty in responding to my questions where he would answer 'I don't know, I can't 'fink' of 'nuffing' else, I can't 'fink' of anyfing else'. However he did elaborate and talk at length when asked why he was happy in the sandpit. He said he was on his own and he knew who his best mate was. Daniel was eventually keen to talk at length about his play times and making traps with his friend.

During this phase of the discussion it was necessary to give Daniel plenty of time to respond to my questions. When asked what he was doing in D4, he took almost half a minute before he talked at length on setting his trap. This confirmed my thinking that Daniel did have the language ability to answer questions which were about his own agenda such as playtime. He seemed reluctant and to a certain extent stuck with questions which related directly to school and the learning situation, but was able to talk at length about playing and making traps. He enjoyed describing the setting of traps, how they worked and who they were for, about letting victims go, not trapping teachers or girls, but just boys 'I don't like' etc. Daniel continued to use the 'draw and tell technique' where he drew his victim in D4 as a

person between two trees and himself hiding as an anonymous 'blob' high up in the tree, whilst at the same time describing the scene.

At this point Daniel raised the issue of being able to cope in the secondary school and how he was worried about his 'mum' letting him go to the secondary school or not (18 months ahead). He said that his mum wanted his 'learning to be right' and that 'if I don't, I don't know where she will put me'. I tried to return to the drawings, but Daniel only commented about not wanting to go to senior school because 'it's a load of bullies' and eventually again where he 'can't fink of nuffing else'.

We again looked at the pictures, but the interview began to draw to a close with Daniel making a final comment about how he would treat his victim by saying he would run over and say 'don't you pick on me again'. This might have been an opportunity for me to continue to use personal construct psychology and explore further about how Daniel saw his future, but it seemed a natural place to stop the session. Further drawings and conversations about what might happen rather than what had happened might help Daniel to talk about his fears about his schooling.

Emerging themes.

- * You can be happy with a mate who was someone who called round for you and you go out to play with them (on a bike over the ramps).
- * If you were being bullied (D1) in school then you could tell any adult who was around and in particular two specific named teachers.
- * People can be both happy playing alone (D2) and playing hide and seek with mates in school (D3).
- * The drawings can become fluid vehicles and produce new 'stories' or understandings in new situations. That is, sometimes Daniel sees the other person in the drawing as a friend then as a bully.
- * Daniel confirmed that all drawings were in school, but none were in a classroom or learning situation. He liked coming to school, but said that 'I don't like being in school when I get bullied' by pointing to D1 and saying

he was upset. When asked what sort of a person feels 'sad' (the person in D1) he replied a 'bullied one'.

The individual cases described above represent the flavour and style of the discussions held with the rest of the group. The themes and constructs from the remaining five individual cases are shown in Appendix 2a in a series of reduced formats. The main themes from all the cases are shown in the group analysis which follows.

Group findings from the conversations.

The cases are now considered as a whole group. All conversations were transcribed and analysed thematically for emerging categories. Appendix 2b contains the conversational data from all the cases in a reduced form. Themes that emerged regularly are shown in diagram 4.4 on page 126 in the form of a taxonomy and are described below.

- * Being Happy - Sad.
- * Having Friends - Not having friends.
- * Friendships - Being included / excluded from groups. Feeling left out.
- * Being a friend - Not being a friend.
- * Work - Not work.
- * Play - Not play.
- * Cooperation and sharing when working together as a group or team.
- * Additional / Special Educational Needs 'Hut' as a place of safety and security.
- * Hitting other people is wrong.
- * Being bullied and being excluded from groups. Emotional isolation and social bullying through name calling and being excluding from groups, relationships and activities etc.

Interpersonal relationships predominated and these were mainly to do with peer and friendship groups rather than with teacher/pupil relationships. The emphasis was on these relationships during social activities in unstructured

situations. Play and break time situations tended to dominate and the social activities during these times feature as more important than the classroom learning situations. The play times were seen by the pupils as largely unsupervised and this was raised as an issue. These were times and places where some pupils felt at risk in terms of being teased, bullied, picked on and sometimes physically hurt.

Peer Groups.

Some pupils wanted to be included in their peer /friendship groups, but did not have either the skills or abilities to gain access to those groups. They could also feel deliberately rejected or excluded from groups for a range of other reasons. Knowing how to make friends was seen as different from actually being able to. The pupils were able to show a knowledge of the strategies required to enter group activities and develop relationships, but seemed unable to effectively put these into practice. Similarly, ways of encouraging other pupils to join in already formed groups were also known, but again examples were rarely seen by the pupils in practice.

Friendships.

The theme of friendships and what qualities make a friend was discussed by all the participants. Their descriptions tended to be at the functional and behavioural level. That is, they were friends because you did things together, played together and had fun outside the classroom. This understanding extended through to supporting and helping pupils with their work by sitting next to them during lessons. However people who were described as being 'not a friend' were given a range of descriptions which involved emotional aspects such as being jealous as well as behavioural attributes such as physically hurting or bullying you.

Peer conflict and resolution.

Pupils had a range of useful and appropriate strategies for seeking help when in need of support both in the classroom and in the playground. This was particularly so during play time when people were being bullied or

isolated. Seeking help when being stuck in class with learning was by seeking practical help from a friend or a teacher, whilst being unhappy in the playground would also require help but in an emotionally supportive way. This could again be sought from a number of different people. Problem solving in relationships was a strong theme and the pupils seemed to be quite resourceful in having a range of ways of going about this. These included self help skills, giving help to other people, seeking help from peers and seeking help from adults such as teachers, support assistants and 'dinner ladies'. In one case it was believed that the social skills of relating positively to other pupils could be taught. Sarah commented that 'pupils can be taught by teachers to behave properly towards each other' and also they could be sent away to a 'special school' to be taught by special teachers.

Some pupils were capable of seeing two sides of a persons' character at the same time with regard to their behaviour and were able to offer dual statements in terms of observing and understanding other people. These I felt were not contradictions, but reflected their ability to see situations and events as flexible. When some pupils displayed this 'fluid' style of thinking then it opened up possibilities for helping them to re frame their views. For example,

Gareth - 'You can be good and bad (behaviour) at the same time'.

Sarah - 'Bullies do and don't have friends'.

Woody - 'You can be good and bad (at doing things) at the same time'.

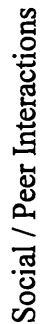
Shane - 'Bullies can be naughty and not naughty at the same time'.

This may well lead to a position where changes in thinking and understanding can occur for a number of pupils. That is, the ability to hold opposing ideas at the same time may increase flexible thinking. This may then allow the development of a perspective which encourages empathy and reciprocity of how other people can feel and see things differently. This theme of how things might be different was frequently referred to within the personal construct conversations.

The pupils were fully capable of coming up with ideas to form the basis of school rules. Sarah for example referred on a number of occasions to having a basic understanding of how we should treat other people. I felt this again reflected the pupils' ability to contribute to and solve their own problems.

The special educational needs 'hut' was frequently seen as a haven of safety and security for many pupils in the research. Here, there were a range of people and activities to help and support pupils. For example the 'alternative play' scheme during break and lunch times provided opportunities to play with other pupils in a semi-structured and supervised way. There were significant adults who would listen to the pupils as individuals and create situations which helped to develop social skills and appropriate interactions with peers and adults.

Diagram 4.4



Exceptions to Group Categorisation.

Any categorisation naturally implies that concepts are both included and excluded. An exclusion from a category may occur with those examples which were considered as exceptions, omissions, absences or just difficult to categorise. These I feel still require acknowledgement.

The appearance or omission of teachers in the drawings and conversations was an example in point. This can be seen as follows,

- * There was only a single reference to any pupils actually being taught by a teacher in a lesson. That was, being 'happy in maths' as drawn by Sarah in D1.
- * Michael in D3 drew himself and a number of classmates together in class with his teacher being present, but made no overt reference to teaching.
- * Gareth drew himself at a table in class in D3 where he appeared to be learning, but no teacher was present. However in D4 he appeared again, but this time with a teacher where he considered that listening was an important learning skill.
- * Kyli, A commented that in D1 she liked to work on the computer on her own and in D4 again she 'likes to learn', but there was no teacher present.
- * Woody on the other hand liked to portray himself in pictures D1 and D2 where he is learning with his teachers being present.

Some further examples of exceptions to themes and categories were as follows.

- * Shane showed a rare insight into his own needs in terms of both learning and socialising. He was one of the few pupils who was also able to

recognise his own negative contributions to interactions and reflect on the possibility as to how things might have been done differently. His understanding of his own teacher's emotional and social needs when dealing with children whose behaviour was difficult to manage was also insightful and unusual in the study. Most pupils showed little understanding of any adult needs within the school.

* Sheldon had very fixed views about being rejected by school and there being no hope of him remaining at school until transfer to secondary school. His subsequent behaviour and school response to it soon led him to his self fulfilling prophecy of being permanently excluded and taking the status of being a pupil out of school and receiving 'home tuition'. His need to be included, valued and wanted was clear during our conversations, but he felt he had no chance of this at the time with his teachers at his current school.

* Winning at games in the playground and having a 'hard' image was very important for Ricky, but this aspect was not seen as an issue in any of the other pupils conversations.

* Kyli (W) seemed worryingly obsessed with jealousy and even hatred for her younger sister. This was apparent both at home where she felt her sister was the family favourite and in school where she was seen as a 'know it all'. This level of sibling rivalry and intense dislike was again missing from all the other pupil conversations.

The individual pupil's 'voice' had been seen and heard through the drawings and the conversations to the point where they eventually blended as one form of evidence. It may have been therefore an artificial although pragmatic distinction to separate them out in the early stages of the analysis. The themes emerging from the group as a whole also reflect the interrelationship between the drawings and conversations.

E) The A/SenCo Discussions.

This section contains the analysis and findings from the initial 'short form' interviews with Gill the A/SenCo which followed the pupil PCP sessions and from the subsequent longer culminating conversation.

a) The A/SenCo 'short form' discussions.

These were recorded as hand written notes and supplemented the individual cases as described in Appendix 2a. These series of interviews were felt to be useful at an information gathering level, but failed to provide a forum for the pupil's voice to be brought back into school or to address pupil experiences, views and understandings.

Our conversations always started with my thoughts and focus being on the pupil, but Gill's agenda was often much broader. We were also often interrupted by teachers and senior staff who brought their own agenda. Some staff apologised for their interruptions whilst others didn't. I felt this both devalued my work and tended to leave me feeling as if I wasn't there. The exception to this being the head teacher who actually joined the discussion, albeit uninvited about a pupil and did not try to change the agenda.

These discussions started off with a focus on the individual, but moved into a discussion about special educational issues, the school and the role of the special needs department within the school. Despite these difficulties I felt it was still useful to document the following points from our discussions.

There was a move within school by certain teachers towards that of elitism attached to the more able pupils. They tended to give little credence to or understanding of children's social and emotional development. Special needs was marginalised and devalued in terms of status and was seen as something that happens 'over there in the hut' or out in the corridor with the help of a learning support assistant.

A tension existed therefore between trying to see special needs as a whole school issue and some teachers who felt it was only there to support the less able and separate therefore from the needs of the academically more able pupil. The special needs 'hut' was seen as a haven for the less academically able pupil. This tended to reinforce the idea that only less able pupils have emotional needs. The special needs classroom however in practice gave respite and sanctuary to any pupils who found the pressures of the classroom difficult to cope with. Some pupils on occasions misbehaved during lessons and either walked out or were sent out and found their way over to the special needs department. Danielle and Gareth were examples of this.

The special needs department was physically, philosophically and psychologically separate from the rest of the school. It seemed that emotional care took place in the 'SEN Hut' whilst the 'real' or academic learning took place in the mainstream of the school. I felt this raised the issue that the emotional aspects of development and learning might be seen by some staff as separate from and of secondary importance to the academic aspects of learning. A whole child approach however would argue that the different aspects of the child cannot be separated out.

Some staff openly criticised and 'put down' very vulnerable pupils in the publicness of the corridor and reception area. I witnessed an example of this with Daniel and with Sheldon. Gill felt that some staff may be unaware, uninformed and/or oblivious to the social and emotional needs of some of the children. They didn't 'know' the child if they were not good learners and also showed emotional and behavioural difficulties. Without an understanding of the whole child some teachers' aspirations for pupils may well be adrift from actual pupil capabilities and needs.

Some special needs pupils seemed to want to become included in the mainstream of the school, but continued to be marginalised due to a range of factors. It may be that they were unable to engage with the strive for

academic success or were unable to interact socially in a reasonable way with large groups of peers in small untidy rooms. They may also be emotionally adrift and seek reassurances in the form of acting out or withdrawn behaviour. This was seen in Danielle who tended to act out to meet her needs whilst Woody was withdrawn and difficult to get to know.

Gill put forward a number of reasons for pupils wishing to be included. These ranged from conforming to the norm, being valued on an equal opportunity level with other pupils, to be listened to and at a basic psychological level where there was a need to be needed.

Reflections on these interviews led me to believe they were useful in that they provided a 'listening ear' or critical friend for Gill and continued to build our relationship in terms of raising and sharing sensitive issues. These were mainly at a departmental and whole school level however rather than at an individual level and they failed to address the questions I wished to raise. This together with a sense that the pupils' voices had not been heard left me with a feeling that we needed to talk again under more conducive circumstances. This led therefore to a further discussion with Gill.

b) The A/SenCo 'long form' discussion.

This section contains the major themes drawn from our discussion. A full transcript is in Appendix 3b. I prepared a copy of the main themes taken from my conversations with the pupils (Appendix 2b), refined these into questions and issues I felt we could address and ensured that Gill received both (Appendix 3a) well in advance of our meeting. There was a questionable, but inevitable time gap between the collection of the pupil drawings (autumn 98) and the pupil conversations (spring 99) and then the initial discussions with Gill (summer 99). This was also evident as we had this discussion in autumn 1999.

I wanted to bring back to the school the findings from the research and to check if there was 'a ring of truth' about them as well as helping the voice of the pupils to be heard within the school system. I hoped that this discussion would help to make the link between what I had found and how it may help and influence the lives of the pupils and the practice of the school. Gill accepted this, but felt some staff might not be receptive to changing their practice in the light of my findings. She referred particularly to the aspect of listening to and taking notice of the pupils' views. The following themes are selected from our conversation.

Unstructured times.

I explained that the majority of the pupils' drawings and discussions were about being outside during informal or unstructured times. Gill agreed that they all liked to talk about relationships, friends and friendships. They wanted to tell you things, to talk to you, but often lacked the vocabulary and patience to express themselves without getting into conflict or becoming frustrated. Gill referred to Michael who could be very limited in his use of language, have difficulty engaging socially with his peers and showed a tendency to become withdrawn. I felt however that he still had a clear understanding of what he needed in order to be happy in school. I referred Gill to his picture of being sad and alone (D1) and having no one to play with compared to his 'friends' picture (D4).

Gill gave a further example of the importance attached by pupils to unstructured times. She said that Sarah had found it very hard when she first came to school and had felt there was no point in coming due to 'not having any friends'. Her view of school was initially all about play and lunchtime which was a major part for her, but actually a very small part of the total school day. Gill explained,

"She was happy in all her lessons even though she is a child who has special needs. She, like a lot of these (pupils in the research) didn't see that as being the main point of school at all".

Gill continued that all of the children in the study had social difficulties in school particularly during the unstructured times and stated,

"Looking at all of them, every single one of those children has been a child that has had problems on the playground, either with bullying or being bullied or both."

Our conversation turned to the theme of pupils and bullying. We discussed how Michael, Daniel and Mason were three pupils who used the special needs room during unstructured times to avoid peer conflict and being bullied on the playground. I felt that they might be described as less articulate than most other pupils in the research, but they still had very clear views about what was important to them and they wanted to express it. Gill agreed that avoiding peer conflict outside of the classroom was a central aspect of their day.

The special needs 'hut'.

I asked Gill if she recognised any 'ring of truth' about the findings. She felt that Mason's answers were particularly revealing. He generated a picture of being a happy child with a happy facade, but was actually socially fragile and vulnerable in the playground. Gill felt that he tended to 'cling to us for safety, coming into the special needs hut and trying to avoid conflict on the playground'. He felt secure with certain adults, 'homed' in on them, but could be over reliant and dependant on them for company and support.

I commented that most children in the research seemed to use the special needs room for something other than learning, coming in particularly during play time and lunch time. Gill said that some of them would leave class with or without permission and come to the room where 'there will be someone they can talk things through with'. In fact for all the cases the special needs room was seen as a safe place, a sanctuary or haven and a place other than just for supporting learning.

It appeared that certain pupils particularly Danielle, were 'skilled' at opting out of class in the morning and 'migrating' towards the special needs room.

This allowed me to raise the theme of the special needs department being something other than just for learning support. I commented,

"You must have asked yourself a number of times what is it about the special needs department that attracts people like Danielle"?

Gill replied,

"It is strange because they do see us in a role where we are being authoritative. I mean although they know we listen and we try not to make judgments so they are allowed to say what they want to say. They do see us as authoritative."

Children often came into the special needs department to discuss matters at home that they were concerned about, even if they were not on the special needs register. This ability by some pupils to take a wider perspective on school life which included other people may explain why they produced pictures about their families and life outside of school. Gill replied that,

"Every single one of these children has got something at home that you ... that I wouldn't want my own children to have to live with. Every single one of them."

Gill felt that the atmosphere in the special needs department allowed children like Mason, Daniel and Michael to have the opportunity to share their views and speak their mind. She said they were able to talk to them in a different way without the pressure of the curriculum and perhaps this was something for the whole school to work on. That is, the way children and adults treat and speak to each other. I suggested there might be other whole school issues which needed to be raised such as teachers' awareness of pupils emotional needs. This might also include raising all staff awareness regardless of their role and extend this to learning support assistants and lunch time supervisors. Gill reinforced the point that conflict for many pupils in the study occurred during unstructured times when supervision

was by general support assistants or play supervisors. This raised a whole school issue around the status of staff employed during these times.

I referred to pupils wanting to make friends, but seeming to actually do the opposite by using inappropriate social skills. Danielle for example in her drawings and her conversations referred at length to wanting to 'work cooperatively' with peers and staff, but this was a major difficulty for her. Gill explained that the special needs staff had spent much time and energy during the afternoon sessions encouraging Danielle to play cooperatively. However in reality she often tried to dominate other children, to spoil their games by taking over, changing the rules or hiding pieces etc. She often tried to take control rather than play cooperatively. This was to the extent that other children were openly reluctant to start games or play with her. Gill explained that the SEN staff felt that Danielle was heavily influenced by activities outside of school which affected her relationships with peers and staff in school.

Relating to peers and teachers.

I raised Kyli (A) as one pupil who saw the relationship with her class teacher as being of particular importance and actually wanted to talk about it. I felt she was also articulate enough to express and discuss this view. Gill explained that Kyli had a very trouble year before I worked with her (mid year school transfer had placed her in the wrong year group and class) and she had needed a lot of adult support to adjust. This might have given her the opportunity to build up relationships with adults and her teacher, because they were aware of her need to be supported and included as part of the school.

Shane also showed an ability to empathise with other peers and his teachers. He was very good at talking about what it was like for his teacher when other pupils messed about. Gill recounted that Shane would often come and talk about his problems at home and admit how his behaviour had caused his mother to become upset. He was also aware of when he and other pupils had upset his teacher. I responded by saying that throughout the

research I was impressed as to how many pupils were able to show some sort of empathy with other pupils, but only Shane had shown any real understanding of his teacher's needs. Particularly his ability to recognise how hard it was for some teachers to teach when some pupils showed difficult behaviour in class.

We discussed the connection between pupils developing good friendships and the ability to also develop respect for other people. Gareth in particular was able to show that he recognised the importance of listening to other people. Gill felt that Gareth was quite a dominant and dogmatic character who assumed he knew the right answer in everything, but as he developed his ability to listen to other people he became easier to get on with. His initial drawings and conversations were very much about satisfying his own needs, whilst D3 and certainly D4 he showed a more expansive understanding of his world such as the importance of listening in class as a learner. Gill agreed that Gareth was a boy who seemed to grow during the year.

She felt that in the early part of the year a problem with many pupils in the research such as Gareth, Kimberly and Sheldon was that they often got into difficulties in relationships by jumping to conclusions and not listening to other points of view. This was something the special needs department had targeted and worked hard on.

I felt that Sarah was another pupil who was able to link the importance of listening and learning. Gill agreed that Sarah was a very articulate and powerful character who worked hard at controlling groups of children by using her strong personality. Sarah's drawings and comments however showed a range of situations where she felt listening to other people was important. This may well contradict the view that some people have of her in school.

I returned to the contribution of Kyli (A) who I thought had a good sense of empathy with other people's needs as well as a good understanding of her own. Gill felt she had been a bully herself and had made life quite unpleasant for a large group of boys, some of whom were included in the research (eg Daniel, Michael and Shane). Gill continued that these boys were easily led and were vulnerable in the social interactions in the playground. I referred to Kyli's construct of bullies and quote her as follows,

"they take it out on other people, blame others, lie about them, get people into their gangs, but bullies do have bully friends".

Gill felt that she was able to talk in terms of how bullies were because she was once quite a powerful one herself.

Pupils as resources.

I raised the theme that the pupils were often able to come up with a range of ideas and strategies for solving their own problems or difficulties.

Gill expanded on this by stating that all the pupils in the research were in their own ways quite powerful characters. They were the types of children who changed and influenced situations as soon as they came into them. Gill felt they all had particular needs and were high profiles within the school and the special needs department. Even Michael in his own quiet, somewhat vulnerable and unassuming way could have become a 'victim', but he actually influenced the group into looking after him and supporting him. This idea of pupils helping, supporting and including one another was evident in the drawings and conversations of Sarah, Michael, Danielle and Kyli,A.

Gill explained that new pupils were shown or 'taught' how to behave by the example of other pupils such as Mason, Daniel and Michael. This idea of children teaching other children the social rules of certain places and

situations compares well with the pupil data on helping each other to resolve peer conflict. That is, they were fully capable of generating their own ways of dealing with their difficulties. Gill agreed that using pupils as examples of good role models in school can be a useful boost to their self esteem. She gave the example of how children such as Michael were supported by their peers and came to spend less time in 'alternative play' as they grew more confident in the play ground. I felt that this understanding may be something that the school as a whole could benefit from rather than just being a special needs issue.

The School Council as a forum for the pupil's voice.

We discussed the development of the school council where children were beginning to have a voice on school issues. Gill said that the children had put a lot of thought into who they wanted to represent them. Such children as those who would be fair, who would take their ideas forward and confidently report back. I asked if there was a representative from anyone on the special needs register or involved in this study and Gill said that sadly there was not. I suggested that this was perhaps an issue for further debate in that the children who were labelled as difficult, less able and most vulnerable may still be without a legitimate 'voice' in school.

Gill added a note of caution to the role of the school council however in that she felt it could put a lot of pressure on the pupil representatives to be exemplary. She felt that no one should be expected to be perfect all the time and that perhaps the role in its present form might be too demanding for pupils on the special needs register. Are these reasonable demands to put on particular children she asked?

Nurture groups to support emotional development.

Our conversation continued about whole school issues and the way in which the special needs department seemed to pick up the majority of pastoral care issues. This has highlighted the need for a nurture group which is in the process of being developed through the special needs

department. Gill felt however that some staff saw the social and emotional development of pupils as secondary to their academic development and therefore best left to the 'care' of the special needs department. This raised the issue that some staff see special needs being best left to the 'specialists' rather than as a whole school matter. Gill gave some encouraging examples however of teachers who were using circle time type activities to raise emotional issues both formally built into the school day and as a flexible approach to resolving conflict when the need arose.

Conclusion.

We concluded our discussion with an understanding that the school now has an opportunity to reflect on and use the findings from the study. That is, the children were concerned mainly with activities and relationships which occurred during unstructured times. This was despite these times being a relatively small part of their day in terms of time. They were also quite resourceful in resolving conflict during break and play times. The pupils were also clearly able to have a view and wished to express that view despite struggling on occasions to find the language to do so.

F) Conclusion.

The opportunity to discuss with the research with Gill and take the 'voice' of the pupils back into the school was a starting point I believe in helping the pupils to feel they had been listened to and heard within the school system. My discussions with the pupils and Gill often transcended school and involved the home and parents which highlighted the absence of the parents' voice in the study.

CHAPTER 5.

DISCUSSION of FINDINGS.

A) Introduction.

This chapter discusses the findings from the pupil drawings, the pupil conversations and the contribution made by the discussions with the A/SenCo.

At a contextual level there was a need to consider my influence on the data collection, analysis and discussion. As the generic educational psychologist for the school did I focus unduly on being an advocate for the child and search for themes to support this role? Did I select examples and extract themes which were based upon my own cultural norms and values? Were issues raised or described which I may have missed or dismissed because I did not value or understand them? Did I produce evidence which depicted the needs of young people as fixed with stable characteristics set within external circumstances or was there evidence of an individual approach to understanding pupil's needs which reflect an interactionist view?

The pupils' ability to contribute to the research.

The children were able to engage with and contribute to the research on a number of levels. They presented themselves as a diverse group of individuals as recognised by Lewis (1995), despite being a group of children categorised on the special needs register as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. Their level of engagement probably spanned a number of rungs of Hart's (1992) ladder of participation and reflected their developmental level and individual needs.

All the participants were keen and happy to attend and stayed throughout all the sessions. They showed a high degree of interest in what we did and never failed to make a contribution at their own level with both the drawings and the conversations. They showed a range in their ability to concentrate and respond in the one to one sessions, but generally managed

to contribute fully on both occasions. Many of them wanted to know when I would be seeing them again and appeared to genuinely have enjoyed what we did and to look forward to the next session. They welcomed the opportunity to express their views and in the main were able to discuss their feelings across a wide range of areas with a sense that we had had a real conversation. This sense that they really wanted to take part in what I was doing helped me to feel that they were genuine participants who freely attended and came with a sense of informed consent.

This study considers that there is an interactionist view of development where a children's understanding of their lives and difficulties derives from the interaction between themselves, their environment and the relationships they encounter there. However some children may see their difficulties as arising from within themselves and therefore define their understanding of school with more reference to themselves rather than to other pupils or their environment. This questions the notion of causality, in that there might not be an appreciation of the influence of other people or that the context can be influenced by personal aspects and individual traits. It is important to recognise that some pupils may have a view of self which reflects their relationships with other people whilst others may project a sense of self that reflects the intentions and drives of the individual will.

I felt that the pupils had a strong sense of telling the truth and were reliable witnesses of their experiences. This may have stemmed from their knowledge and understanding of giving informed consent, the 'safe' nature of our conversations and the notion that the information they gave me was confidential. This aspect of being reliable informants could be further validated by the sharing of experiences in a group setting. Such groups could be used to generate a better understanding of some of the descriptors that the pupils used to describe experiences. Terms such as being bullied were frequently used and could need greater clarification.

B) The Pupils' drawings.

How can children's drawings help to illuminate the educational world of the pupil and what do they tell us about their experiences of school?

Appendix 1 contains drawing examples.

The pupils were able to depict a range of experiences in their drawings showed aspects of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. A range of feelings such as loneliness (Michael D1), sadness (Danielle D1, and Sarah D2), being upset (Kimberly D1 and Sheldon D1) and jealousy (Kyli, W. D2) were all drawn. Pictures showing enjoyment and pupils being happy and in the playground were Michael D4, Kimberly D2 and Danielle D2 and in the classroom in Sarah D1, Kyli A, D4 and Kyli W, D1. Peer group influences during unstructured times were seen to have both positive and negative effects. Positive peer influence can be seen in Michael D4, Danielle D4 and Sarah D3 whilst negative social interactions which caused worry or anxiety were in Sarah D2 and Kimberley D1. Within the classroom pupils were depicted as working as individuals rather than in group situations and it was difficult to attribute any direct positive or negative peer influences.

The drawings tended to be of past events and this was confirmed by the pupils. There may have been contradictions in the pupils' views and what they thought they were expected to say. Discussing each picture with the pupil during the first session and then returning to use them in the personal construct learning conversation helped to validate their meaning. However some pictures came to mean different things at different times. This process of recalling and documenting events may have helped the participants to reflect upon their experiences and could be a practical framework for use with a range of children in other contexts. The pupils could be encouraged to appreciate that some contexts in school provided positive experiences whilst others framed negative ones. Some pictures however were predictive in nature and represented what the pupil would like to happen. These tended to be the fourth drawings as in Danielle D4

and Daniel D4. This could development the understanding that the future can to a certain extent be constructed or planned and thereby introducing the possibility of change or different understandings. That is, things could be different in the future from what they had been. Ravenette (1980b) believes that this process holds the potential for children to become aware of and perhaps revise their constructions of themselves and their circumstances.

In order to more fully understand pupils' views it may be useful to predict what they might expect or would like to happen in the future rather than just reflecting on the past. Roller (1998) examines the theme of exploring pupils' expectations rather than their pasts or their difficulties. There may be a distinction between pupils who appreciate a need for themselves to change and those pupils who see the need for other aspects of their education to change eg school, curriculum, peers and teachers etc. This raises the issue of whether the pupils see themselves as individuals or as having a group identity in relation to other children. Future research could explore how pupils see themselves in relation to their difficulties and whether they see them as lying within themselves or occurring as a result of their interaction with their surroundings. Also whether they feel they have any influence and control over their situations. Much special needs practice still reflects the tension between a within-child deficit medical model and the more expansive social understanding of the construction of difficulties.

Further analysis of the drawings is always possible and one route could be to explore the reasons behind the lack of drawings set in the formal classroom and the absence of teachers and other adults. This might lead to an understanding of the apparent lack of importance attached by the pupils to the curriculum, the classroom and teachers etc. This could inform the structure and planning of pupil and adult interactions in formal situations. However the converse is also true about how the current understanding can inform and influence the planning of unstructured situations and times. The

degree to which break times should be organised and planned could be an issue for discussion with the pupils. Some pupils may prefer to have a break and playtime away from teachers and structured activities. This does not negate the need for adult supervision however during these periods.

Exploring pupil views did allow an understanding of whether pupils feel out of step either socially or academically with the rest of the school. If this was the case there could be a mismatch between the pupils' needs and what is provided by the school in terms of formal and informal experiences.

Michael, Daniel, Kyli W and Woody all drew social situations which gave cause for concern. This appreciation of a mismatch between needs and provision can be of value both for the school and the individual in terms of trying to reduce that gap. This is a worthwhile aim in any work with children in school. An important aspect of child-centred work is to be able to offer experiences matched or 'scaffolded' within reach of the child's efforts and abilities. Children are likely to develop best in those zones of proximal development which take account of where a child is in terms of their academic, social and emotional development.

The drawings supported the research on a number of levels. They helped the pupils to document, record and provide evidence of their experiences. These can provide the basis for feedback to the school as they represent both individual and collective memories of the learning experience. They also facilitated both the initial and PCP conversations where there was an opportunity to offer quality listening time to the participants.

C) The Pupils' conversations.

What information can be gained through a personal construct interview with primary aged pupils regarding their educational experiences?

Appendix 2 contains the conversational data.

Making a contribution.

The pupils had a view about their school lives and were fully able to participate in the sessions which gave 'voice' to those views. The structure and method of drawing and talking was flexible enough to take account of different developmental, concentration and language levels.

The pupils' opinions mainly reflected interactions with their peers in informal situations in school, but some reflected life experiences in general with an overlap between school and home. Formal learning was marginalised and peer relationships in the classrooms were rarely discussed. This may have been a particular characteristic of the participants, reflecting their status on the special needs register. Further research could explore this issue with pupils not on the register to see if this is generally true of pupils of this age in this context. The following themes emerged from our conversations.

Expressive language and emotions.

The participants were happy to contribute to the study in terms of wanting to express their views and to be 'listened to', but generally lacked the emotional vocabulary and expressive language skills to talk about themselves in depth. Hinton (1991) considers that pupils of this age are at an 'exterior' stage of awareness, where language used and the ability to self report have an emphasis on physical characteristics, peer acceptance and behavioural conduct. This aspect of the pupils lacking expressive language skills may place them at risk of being marginalised in terms of opportunity and equal opportunities in relation to those pupils who are more able to express their wishes and their voice their opinions. Michael and Mason both found the conversations difficult, but their 'voice' may have been completely lost in anything other than the one to one sessions.

Those pupils who are more able in terms of their expressive ability may become more valued in their opinions because they can 'speak' and be heard. Sarah, Kyli A and Gareth all voiced their opinions with ease and entered fully into the conversations, but many others were limited in their

ability. It might be that greater opportunities are given to those pupils whose views are seen as being important or of more value than those pupils who have expressive language difficulties and are labelled as having special educational needs. This theme in the research could be viewed as a whole school issue rather than being marginalised as a special needs one. This could form an aspect of further research where staff views are sought in relation to both the status and abilities of pupils defined as having special educational needs. The existence of a separate room designated for working with such pupils and geographically located away from the main buildings may well reinforce such an image of separatism. My research in the special needs room might have contributed to and reinforced this image.

The responses indicated that some participants used a restricted expressive vocabulary and could benefit from the development of language and emotional literacy skills. This should be a whole school issue and would help pupils to distinguish between and describe a greater range of emotions they experienced. It may also help pupils to generally improve their expressive language ability which could reduce conflict across a range of areas, eg between staff and pupils. Pupils who are more able to expressive themselves are less likely to become frustrated and use inappropriate language and methods when they find themselves in difficult situations.

Social interaction and forming friendships.

The overriding message from the data was that the dominant culture in the playground was that of being collaborative and forming friendships, rather than one of hostility and antagonism. There was a striving by the pupils to be included in their peer groups with a sense that being bullied can tend to isolate you both in the classroom and the playground. This striving for being included is poignant in that the pupils did draw and talk about problems with peers and friends, but they always came round to how those problems could be resolved, how friendships could be reformed and how school life could be improved in general. They emitted a healthy air of

optimism in terms of trying to get on with each other and making playtime a happier experience.

I felt that the pupils were a rich source of knowledge and information about the playground culture and that they could be used as a resource for generating whole school ideas for promoting positive peer group interactions. The pupils were generally more interested and attached more importance to the social interactions in school, which in terms of time was actually a small part of their day. Formal learning was less important than social interaction, yet in terms of time and teacher importance probably represented a greater contribution to the pupils' lives. This again may represent a mismatch between teacher and pupil needs and expectations.

The discussions and drawings tended to focus on informal situations which only occasionally included adults, but rarely include teachers or lessons. The taxonomy of pupil views on page 126 refers to staff helping to resolve conflict as a secondary resort and as one of a number of strategies. Shane and Sarah (Appendix 2a) were strong advocates of their relationship with their class teacher in a learning situation, but they were in the minority. Shane talked openly and empathetically about his teacher's difficulty with managing pupil behaviour, whilst Sarah actually referred to enjoying learning with her teacher in a formal sense.

Conflict Resolution.

A wide range of strategies were suggested for dealing with peer difficulties and resolving conflict. These included using themselves and other pupils to mediate in disputes as well as seeking help and support from learning assistants, playground staff, teaching staff and senior staff. Solutions offered reflected their conceptual understanding of the different attributes people needed in order to be a friend etc. They were also able to distinguish between people you play with occasionally, friends you meet and seek out regularly and best friends who you can trust and share secrets with.

Alternative Play.

All participants in the research recognised the existence and the importance of the alternative play facility and its location in the special needs classroom. Pupils chose to attend, but had to ask permission to come as space was limited. They were encouraged to play cooperatively and share, under the supervision of the special needs staff. This facility and opportunity has evolved out of the special needs practice and vision which recognised the need in some pupils to have a physical and emotional safe space. This represents what Greenhalgh (1994) refers to as providing 'emotional holding' for vulnerable pupils during playtime.

The pupils felt it was open to everyone and not just those who spent some of their lessons there. Their references to this facility was probably the closest we got to talking directly about special educational needs, but the focus was always on its use during playtime. No one during the research referred to themselves as having special needs and needing to be taught in the 'hut' instead of their main classroom. Some references were made by pupils to using the special needs facility for time out when either walking out or being sent out of their classroom.

Developing Empathy.

Some pupils were able to show that they can carry two often opposing views in their thinking at the same time. This I feel may indicate that were in the early understandings of developing empathy. Shane for example in his drawings and conversations was able to show care and sympathy for his teacher when she found it hard teaching 'difficult' pupils. He also knew that he and other pupils can be naughty and not naughty at the same time. He appeared quite astute and to have a good understanding about other people's needs for a pupil of his age and development. Shane transferred to a special school for pupils described as having moderate learning difficulties with its implied assumptions about development.

Kyli, A described bullies as people who can be your friend, but turn other friends against you to the point that your best friend can end up calling you names. Woody also expressed feelings that he could be happy and sad at the same time when he was happy that people were believing him, but sad when telling the sad things that were said or done to him. This aspect of being able to show empathy and reflect on one's experiences at an emotional level was encouraging since it could allow the development of taking responsibility for the impact of actions and behaviours on other people.

Relating whole life issues.

There were indications that some participants found it difficult to separate their lives into school and home etc. For example the fourth drawings of Danielle, Kyli W, Sarah and Kimberley. Perhaps there was a blurring of their worlds of school and home or perhaps they interpreted the task in terms of life experiences and their relationships in general rather than just what happens in school. This was despite being asked to draw pictures of 'self in school' and the study taking place in school. However they wanted to communicate about their life experiences in general and their relationships between peers and families etc, rather than just their school experiences.

D) Pupil views and 'official' perspectives.

The draft Code of Practice (2000a) states that the LEA's has a critical role in encouraging and supporting pupil participation across all phases of education. Some LEA's already consult children and young people with special educational needs about how the whole system of assessment, planning and review might be improved to make it more user-friendly and about how they wish to be consulted.

The Somerset Local Education Authority in response to the DfEE Circular 1/98 (1998) developed their Behaviour Support Plan (1998) (in conjunction

with the Education Development Plan). This plan emphasised giving young people a genuine voice by stating.

“We believe that the more young people feel able to express themselves in a secure and supportive context, the more able they will be to make decisions about their life style that are positive and constructive. We must be prepared to listen to what they say and be prepared to monitor our structures and provision as a result.”

Behaviour Support Plan (1998), page 8.

The Plan goes further in an attempt to provide a mechanism for involving the pupil by emphasising the need to identify early on those pupils who are not responding to approaches based on the whole school policy. For these pupils it is necessary to implement effective assessment strategies and related individual education plans (IEP's) using the staged procedures of the SEN Code of Practice (1994). The Plan states on page 35 that “Pupils themselves (and wherever possible their parents / carers) will be involved in drawing up the IEP”. That is, they will be asked about and involved in target setting for specific areas such as developing positive relationships, building self-esteem, identifying and teaching any undeveloped skills of behaviour and relationships and avoiding any trigger points for behaviour difficulties.

The school involved in the research was part of the Education Achievement Zone Application (1999) which promoted consultation with pupils through their ‘schools councils’ and stated explicitly,

“Subsequent consultation will be used to find out the opinions of the pupils and ensure that there are Schools Councils in every school (including infant and special) to provide practical experience of citizenship feeding into a Zone Council with formal links to the Forum for pupils to be fully empowered within the zone.”

Education Achievement Zone Application (1999), page 12.

This local initiative may have gone some way to building on the national Green Paper Programme of Action (DfEE, 1998) suggestion that some authorities have experimented whereby children with special educational needs have had opportunities to meet local policy makers. However the specific school involved in this research project has perhaps been less forward thinking in this aspect of seeking pupil views. During the research period the LEA led a school improvement project (improving the quality of teaching and learning) where both the information gathering process and action plan paid no attention to either consulting with pupils or listening to their voice. This research project was therefore perhaps poignant and relevant in both these aspects.

The language of official views is clear however in that it promotes the 'opportunity' for pupils to be consulted and for their views 'to be taken into account'. The promotion of rights is paramount with a developing sense of partnership and equal opportunity. The draft Code of Practice (2000a) builds on the original Code (1994) where there is consideration of pupils being involved to develop and monitor agreed targets through their individual education plans. Pupils should be involved in order to track their own progress and reach achievements within a programme of action which is designed to meet their particular needs.

There is however little guidance as to how this can or should happen although it considers that sensitivity, honesty and mutual respect will be essential in encouraging children to share their concerns, discuss strategies and see themselves as equal partners with the school. The Code suggests that both school and LEA staff will need information and training on consulting with children and young people and in particular those with communication difficulties. LEA's may wish to develop training options to build the confidence and competence of all staff in working with children, however complex their needs. Learning support staff have a critical role in supporting many children and their training should include

an element on pupil participation and the development of communication skills.

Accessing pupils' views.

It is clear that the pupil views play an increasingly important part of any assessment work with them. Official documentation ensures that the mechanisms are in place, but the method is left open to individuals and organisations. This research has attempted to bridge the gap between the official direction to seek pupil views and how to ethically, reliably and practically go about it.

The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need (2000) gives some guidance in this area however. It considers that if the process of assessment is to be child centred then an understanding of what is happening to the child must be gained through direct work. Direct work with children is an essential part of the assessment, as well as recognising their rights to be involved and consulted about matters that affect their lives. It will be necessary to develop user-friendly information for children and young people. Such information may take a number of different forms eg, written, visual, audio recorded and may be provided through alternative communication systems.

Children may feel anxious and confused about the purpose of an assessment and should be given the opportunity to talk in private if necessary about their concerns. Communicating with some children may require more preparation, sometimes more time and on occasions specialist expertise. For example, for children with communication difficulties it may be necessary to use alternatives to speech such as signs, symbols, facial expressions, eye pointing, objects of reference or drawing. Young pupils with special educational needs may have low self-esteem and lack confidence. Children in (special schools) may need additional support or time to 'practise' expressing their views. Very young children and older children with learning, communication or sensory difficulties may be

unable to make their views and wishes known without additional help. However, no presumption should be made about levels of understanding and communication.

Very young children can be encouraged to choose play activities, to select their own clothes and to share their wishes and feelings with staff.

Consultation with young children will necessitate a range of communication strategies, which may include the use of play, art, video as well as verbal communication. The early learning goals in the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (DfEE, 2000c) recognise the importance of children's ability to develop competencies and confidence progressively and to have opportunities to develop a range of social as well as educational skills.

Young children who know that their opinions will be valued and who can practice making choices, will be more confident and effective pupils during the school years.

Actively encouraging these pupils to track their own progress and record achievement within a programme of action designed to meet their particular learning or behavioural difficulty will contribute to improved confidence and self-image. The Framework (DoH, 2000) considers that children who play an active part in assessment and in developing and monitoring agreed targets will have greater self esteem and feel confident they are making progress.

The following are examples of research that has addressed the issue of how to access pupil views. Haydon and Ward (1996) used semi-structured questions with a supporting booklet which allowed children to make their own contributions. This method also helped to raise teacher awareness of the importance of pupil views. Connor (2000) uses self-report schedules when investigating issues of inclusion and school-based anxieties, whilst Mortimer (2000) has developed a booklet called 'Taking Part' which allows children to comment and contribute to their statutory assessment. She feels that it helps children to take an interest in what is happening to them and

also provides a framework to help them 'see' their own special educational needs.

Durkin (2000) discusses the Wolfendale (1990) booklet 'All about me' which provides young pupils an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings, whilst Gersch and Nolan's (1994) booklet 'Where do I go from here' for pupils who were excluded helped pupils understand their situation by asking questions based upon a personal construct psychology approach. Fox and Norwich (1992) have also shown that the self perceptions of those with intellectual difficulties can be assessed reliably using semi-structured interviews based on elicitation methods derived from Personal Construct theory.

Elliot and Faupel (1997) however have used pupils' views to directly inform a school's approach and policy to bullying. They considered their method was a useful way of consulting with children and giving them a part in the consultation process which empowered them to become more active in working towards change. They were in effect seen as a resource to support and inform the school.

Further evidence of this type of involvement at primary level comes from Harrison (2001) where he describes how pupils can be involved in teaching each other how to behave. They are capable of setting targets and producing criteria for behaviour expected within school which again led to informing school policy and practice.

The advice from the revised Code (2000a) supports the involvement of children in informing school policy. At a school community level schools councils are seen as a mechanism for including and representing all pupils in the organisation and management of the school. All schools should ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all aspects of the school life and are enabled to have an equal voice.

The benefits of pupil participation.

The benefits espoused by official documentation are considered to be far reaching in that children who are involved can become more confident and successful both socially and academically. The draft Code of Practice (2000a) promotes the personal and social benefits of pupil consultation and involvement stating that it can lead to developments in confidence and self esteem where pupils are more able to take a fuller role in learning through choice and decision making. It considers that the process also becomes a 'framework' for making sense of their lives.

This may be an ambiguity of direction however where children's views are sought on ethical human rights grounds and how their views can be collated, given weight and contribute towards more effective learning approaches. Facilitating pupils to express their voice at a school level enables them to have greater control and understanding of their own learning and its context. It can encourage them to make informed choices about their interactions and to have access to discussions, planning and information that directly involves them.

Norwich (1998) considers that it is of paramount importance to include and involve children as actively as possible in their assessment and encourage them to take a more active role in planning and reviewing their own progress. He states that,

"taking account of the child's perspective links in with a more child centred approach, involving the learner in the learning process through self assessment, self evaluation and personal goal setting."

Norwich (1998), page, 147.

Norwich sets this process within a framework of target setting for learners and raising standards in schools, where the targets are set by those in

authority such as politicians, parents and teachers. This position can however conflict with a child centred approach of self assessment where the teacher 'concedes significant influence to the learner'. Targets can become requirements for learners and are in a sense incompatible with personal involvement and voice. The draft Code of Practice (2000a) however provides a system of individual educational planning which includes individual learning targets. Here children with special educational needs can play an active part in reviewing their learning and setting personal targets.

Target setting is considered to be an important tool for raising pupil attainment in that all targets (pupils, teachers, school and LEA) derive from pupil attainments. Within the Somerset Education Development Plan there are targets to raise the standards of underachieving groups (reducing exclusions and improving attendance) and targets to enrich the curriculum and promote personal development. This includes a focus on supporting learners with additional educational needs.

Hobbs et al (2000) supports this view and considers that the purpose of involvement is not simply about ascertaining children's views about their learning, but it is to enhance the learner's capacity for managing their own learning more effectively. The purpose of an assessment may not be to find out what is enabling or hindering a young person's learning, but to work with a child in such a way that they are more able to move forward in their learning. To provide the child with a greater understanding of their own situation and the actions required to undertake positive change.

They comment further on the developing different 'technologies' for accessing children's views and supports the use of Personal Construct Psychology which highlights the unique perspectives of each person, and emphasises that the child has a perspective we cannot know unless we find a way to ask. Each child has a unique interpretation of the world s/he functions within.

Conclusion.

The pupils in this research showed that they have the ability to reflect on a range of experiences they have in school and in the playground in particular, primarily regarding their peer relationships. They were forthcoming and positive in suggesting a range of strategies to improve relationships and resolve conflict.

E) The A/SenCo discussions.

Can a series of discussions with the school A/SenCo help to both validate the voice of the pupil and ensure that it is heard within the school system?

Appendix 3 contains the A/SenCo data.

The initial individual pupil discussions.

Gill the A/SenCo was asked because of her central role in supporting the pupils on a daily basis, her knowledge about each child and her child centred approach to special needs. These initial interviews therefore failed to address the research questions, but seemed to fulfil a supportive role for the special needs staff. On reflection I felt they were poorly conducted and their purpose needed to be redefined in terms of the research questions. The emerging question of taking the pupils' voices back into school provided greater direction and meaning and a further discussion was arranged. This took place at my office and focussed on the data as a whole and used individual cases as examples.

The subsequent longer discussion.

This discussion with Gill took the form of a learning conversation where we were able to talk about the findings in a forum which allowed the pupils' voices to be heard within the school system. I tried to develop new understandings about the pupils and their views for both myself and Gill. An extension should have been to take these understandings back to the pupil for validation and not just to Gill. Nevertheless it was a learning

experience for both myself and Gill who was able to see certain 'truths' in the findings.

There was a general agreement that most of the pupils portrayed their real selves in terms of the importance they placed on their social interactions and unstructured times. Gill was surprised that there was so little said about the formal learning situations and teachers. She felt that this would be useful for the staff to know in that it might help them to develop a different understanding of the pupils' priorities in school.

Gill was curious about the emphasis Danielle put on making friends and cooperating with peers and staff. She was generally considered to be very confrontational with most people and rarely made friends without bullying them herself. This I felt highlighted the gap between pupils knowing what they wanted to do, knowing how to go about it, but not being successful in putting it into practice. Gill felt that addressing this mismatch was part of the ongoing work of the special needs department and that she really wanted it to become a whole school issue.

There was a sense that the special needs department saw all pupils in school as being in need of emotional and social support, whilst any difficulties perceived in the mainstream classroom of this nature were considered to be solely a special needs problem. Booth et al (2000) discusses how the words 'special' and 'needs' are misleading and inappropriate in that they imply something that can only be dealt with by a specialist, rather than as whole school responsibilities. Generally special educational needs (emotional, social and academic) were not seen as whole school issues, but something which was dealt with elsewhere or 'over there' in another part of the school.

At a school systems level it appeared that the special needs departments served a number of purposes for a whole range of children. It could be a safe haven physically and emotionally for children during structured and

unstructured times regardless of whether they had special needs or not. In fact children could access the staff and facilities when they perceived they needed help and support and not just when they were sent there either for academic support or emotional time out.

The opportunity to meet with Gill enable me to share the findings and allow the pupils views to be heard within the school system. However whether this can be taken further forward and have a direct impact upon practice remains a question. The pupils have all moved to other schools and the school itself has seen many changes in terms of staff and practices. The development of a nurture group and the school council do reflect the themes in the study about the need for an improvement in pupils' emotional literacy and a forum for the pupils views to be heard.

F) Absences in the research.

Special educational needs.

There was a distinct lack of reference by the participants to being categorised as having special educational needs. I sought pupil views in a pro-active way where they were invited to be involved in the research rather than being referred to me in my role as the generic school educational psychologist. I therefore asked the pupils about themselves and their views of school prior to there being any special needs agenda. However all the pupils were already in 'the system' and on the special needs register and so in a sense all work with them was by definition reactive. Also six participants were referred to me in my generic role during the study.

I sought the participants' views on their schooling in general and not specifically on their special needs status. I did not refer to special needs in any of our conversations, but my usual role, the location of most of my generic work and all the research might have implied that there were special needs connotations associated with my presence. The perception by some

staff might have been that I was researching special needs although the pupils seemed to be unaware of this. A question could be to ask a cross section of pupils and staff what they thought my work and my role was during the study.

A number of pupils did have a view on 'having' special needs and were capable of expressing it, but not one pupil referred to themselves as such. This may be perceived as a positive aspect of their development in that they did not feel separate or labelled, but I did feel they were to a certain extent unaware of the school system which categorised them as such. This raised the issue of children being informed about decisions made for and about them.

A future question could be 'what was their view of being categorisation and labelling as having special educational needs'? Asking a range of pupils to draw and talk about a 'special needs child' could be enlightening and reflect the methods of Tamm (1996), Sandow (1997) and Newton and Newton (1999). Some pupils might object to being defined in this way and not wish to be placed on the register. I am aware of pupils in other schools who do not wish to visit or be taught in the learning support facility due to the negative connotations associated with it.

The research sought to give pupils who are categorised as having special needs a voice. In terms of equal opportunities and rights they are entitled to be heard and listened to regardless of their status in school. It may be that they do not see themselves as having special needs other than receiving some of their education in a separate place from the main classrooms. The construction of having special educational needs and labelled as such may have no meaning for them. Although it might have been reasonable to expect the pupils to show an awareness of this labelling. That is particularly since their perceived special needs category of emotional and social needs was visible in their acting out behaviour. All participants did have a range of complex needs however.

The pupils did talk in terms of receiving help and support in the special needs 'hut', but saw this as normal and not something designed to separate them out or isolate them. Here there was again an emphasis on the importance of the social interactions rather than on the content of the curriculum. This is a theme that appears throughout the study. That is, the importance of social interactions throughout school and the minimal impact or consideration given to learning. This questions whether the pupils were aware they were on the special needs register of the school and the implications the negative labelling effects? Were they able to give their voice within the framework of an externally imposed construct? An important point in the research may be that the participants were aware that they were individuals and had individual differences, but that they did not know or recognise that the external systems in their lives had categorized them and labelled them 'for their own benefit' as having special educational needs.

It may be that their naive understanding of their own school lives was a stepping stone to understanding that they want to be perceived as individual children. Their lack of recognition of their status as pupils with special needs was in itself a contribution to understanding that they wished to portray themselves as pupils who have equal rights and opportunities regardless of need. This helps to recognise them as individuals who have different needs and not an homogenous group of pupils distinguishable or separate from the 'mainstream' classification of pupils. I feel the participants had no conceptual awareness of having special educational needs and therefore of being different from any other pupil. This in itself could be a challenge to the labelling and categorisation of pupils in school.

It is accepted that pupils at all stages of their education are entitled to be asked their views and that this should be done in sensitive and appropriate ways which respects their understanding, their developmental level and conceptual ability. The debate should continue however as to whether pupils should be asked about their views as discrete groups such as

categorised on the special needs register or as just pupils in school. It may be that special needs children are marginalised in terms of being listened to and need to be recognised as an identifiable group in order to have a voice. It is interesting to note that the school were in the process of developing a schools council which had no special needs children on it. All pupils are entitled to express their views, but specific or individual children may need particular ways of helping them to express their voice.

This could lead to a tension in that some pupils and parents may not want to be categorised and segregated into a particular group in order to have their 'voice' heard. This may lead to them being perceived as being more needy, less able, of less worth and value and 'different' in terms of their learning or social and emotional dispositions. On the other hand some parents may wish to have their children's differences and difficulties recognised in order to have additional and specialised support. The question may well be that despite pupils being individuals and having 'different' educational needs they should have equal opportunities and rights in terms of being listened to and being heard. This method of asking for views through drawings, then through discussion and then via a semi-structured learning conversation could apply to a range of individuals regardless of their artificial categorisation on a special needs register.

G) Conclusion.

The research process resulted in a wealth of information about pupils' experiences in school and provided the participants with a forum to voice their views. It also allowed them to have quality time in terms of someone listening to them at length. This should be recognised and acknowledged in terms of the pupils and the school having the opportunity to know themselves a little better than they did at the beginning of the research.

The participants showed themselves to be reliable rich resources of information regarding the social interaction of the school playtime and the

delivery of the curriculum. That is what they implied and what they denied. They showed they could generate strategies for conflict resolution and comment on the benefits of an alternative 'hidden' curriculum in 'alternative play'. Their contribution as a group passed social comment on the school culture and should inform whole school issues.

The data collected showed that the unstructured times in the playground are paramount in the minds of young children despite it being a disproportionate amount of time in terms of the time spent in the classroom. They actively seek to be included in friendship groups and appreciate the importance of peer relationships. They are also pro-active in attempting to resolve conflict between themselves and therefore show signs of taking responsibility and ownership of their actions and behaviours. They were able to talk about their emotions in social interactions and friendships and showed themselves to be sensitive about how they are treated by their peers.

The research process has had a direct influence on and relevance for my professional practice. I have gained an insight into seeking pupil's views and being an advocate for the child which has informed my understanding of children's rights particularly within the educational system. This includes the notion of the right for self development in both the researcher and the participants.

The research techniques proved successful in engaging relatively young children in the process of research. Pupils were provided with an opportunity to reflect on their educational experiences and the findings underpin the need to treat all students as unique individuals in their own right. They provided rich accounts of their world, enjoyed the attention given to them and wanted to tell their story. The value and validity of their accounts should not be understated.

In this process of self reporting and assessment the pupils were able to reflect on their own skills and personal qualities which could provide the

mechanism for developing increased self control with less reliance on other forms of control. Thereby developing more personal responsibility for progress and the potential for change. There is a need in such a system however for reasonably well developed communication feedback skills and an ability to positively self evaluate which would be an area for the school to develop. There is still a need to complete the 'evaluative circle'.

The research acknowledges that pupils have rights and deserve respect as individuals. They have views about their lives, about the things that happen to them and are imposed upon them. They want to express their views and despite not being used to being asked are able to take the opportunity to talk and say what they think. They are entitled to give informed consent about the level at which they wish to participate in the research and that this is an ongoing and continual process.

The representation of minority groups within education should continue to be explored. That is, pupils who have additional or special educational needs should have equal opportunities to express their opinions and not be further marginalised. A lack of expressive language ability and limited vocabulary should not further disadvantage pupils who may already feel that their views are not listened to. The research suggests that marginalised children with special educational needs can be positively engaged in giving their views of their experiences and in being a resource for problem solving in informal and unstructured times. This suggests that there is a place for learning conversations between school staff and pupils which can generate more specific and productive ideas about relationships in unstructured times.

This method is a way of presenting phenomena as experienced by individuals which accepts that there will always be alternative descriptions. The method may nevertheless be a useful way for pupils to describe how they may be thinking and feeling at that time. The methodology used and responses reported in this paper should provide encouragement to other

researchers who wish to include the views of young people in their work. It may be possible to apply the techniques to other areas of the school day where there is a more specific focus such as teaching and learning styles and to particular students as a means of commenting on their special needs, levels of support and individual targets and thereby contributing to the assessment process.

Incorporating various ways of consulting with children needs to be seen not just as a technical change in practice (for educational psychologists for example), but as a political change in focus and approach. In order to empower children to take greater control of their own learning, educationalists need to consider how their work with and about children can be genuinely collaborative. Fundamentally we need to reposition ourselves so that we can hear children's stories and so that these stories can challenge the narrative of our own practice with them. We need to work so that children feel they can own and direct their own story.

Pupil participation should be the goal for all children. If children are involved in planning programmes, then achievements can be noted and celebrated as well as difficulties clarified and addressed. By encouraging active pupil participation and seeking views then it is possible to build upon positive experiences. Pupils can be actively encouraged to track their own progress and record achievement within a programme of action designed to meet particular learning or behavioural difficulties which will contribute to improved confidence and self image.

CHAPTER 6.

EVALUATION of METHODOLOGY.

A) Introduction.

Moving from analysis to discussion.

This chapter discusses the development of the methodology of using drawings and personal construct conversations as tools for seeking pupils' views. This includes the changes made from year 1 to year 2/3 and the ethical considerations of researching with young children.

Figg et al (1996) consider that analysis can be lead to the discussion and evaluation at three basic levels. A textual level (surface structures of the data), a psychological level (theories underpinning the data) and at a contextual level (what is the purpose of the study and who will benefit from the findings). I feel this may be a useful framework to use.

B) Changes from Year 1 to Year 2/3.

At a textual level the method developed in the preliminary study and extended in this research with pupils aged nine, ten and eleven allowed them to find and express their 'voice'. The preliminary work focussed on collecting drawings in group settings with pupil views being expressed in an individual purely nonverbal way. The current method developed the personal construct conversation as an integral part of and extension to the drawing collection. The picture content and first conversation formed a framework for structuring the questions and approaches in the subsequent personal construct conversations with the pupils. This development allowed the pupils to express themselves in both verbal and non verbal ways. This method which was perhaps less constraining and allowed greater flexibility for the pupil in giving their responses. The pupils were able to convey messages about behaviours, thoughts and feelings through their drawings and conversations.

The preliminary study collected two drawings each from individuals in group settings. The picture content was analysed into themes both for individuals and as a group. Hypotheses were drawn up to inform an individual case study approach to seeking the pupils' views of school. Time constraints did not permit a return to talk to the pupils and they were therefore unable to describe, discuss and thereby validate their pictures. This weakness of failing to involve the pupils in validating the 'messages' in their drawings led to the development of the personal construct conversations in years 2/3.

In year 1 I acknowledged that there could be a certain level of reactivity between myself as researcher and the group, as well as between the individuals within the group itself. Group work creates its own dynamics which may reduce the opportunity for ownership of personal views, understandings and meanings. The data collected in years 2/3 was entirely in individual situations which supported seeking the personal perspectives aim of the study.

This change may have been one of the influencing factors in the reduced time the pupils in years 2/3 spent completing their drawings and the subsequent relatively reduced surface content and detail of their pictures. The overall artistic ability and skill level also appeared to be of less quality, but I feel this was not entirely attributable to the nature of the individual sessions. It may be that pupils of this age respond better in terms of the detail and quality of their drawings when the task is more researcher directed, less open ended and completed in groups as in year 1. Group situations can be competitive and create a more work like atmosphere where individuals may be reluctant to finish early. Other considerations could be the seriousness with which the pupils took the task and their ability to make thoughtful representations which could be linked to cognitive and drawing skills. The group situation did allow pupils to draw at their own pace without scrutiny from myself or others. In the individual sessions it was not

possible for the pupil to blend with others and there might have been a sense of being 'watched' and me waiting for them to finish.

In year 1 the children were selected to join the study and I controlled the data collection. There was little opportunity for dialogue or interaction by the pupils beyond the group construction of the initial 'concept map'. This approach questioned the aim for pupils to give informed consent and to become participants in a collaborative study. In year 2/3 however the pupils were able to exert a greater influence over the level and depth to which they contributed in both sessions. With the drawings there was no overt influence or direction from me or from any peers. The pupils were allowed to participate and contribute at their own level with both the drawings and conversations being accepted unconditionally, regardless of quality and effort.

In year 1 I restricted the pupils to draw pictures of the given bi-polar elements of happy and unhappy experiences in school which reflected my construct and did not allow the pupils to place their own definitions or meanings on the task. In year 2/3 the pupils were asked to draw a series of pictures freely and without the restriction of predetermined elements or titles with no initial or subsequent element being offered by myself. The pupil was simply asked to 'draw a picture of themselves in school'. They were then able to place their own meanings and interpretations on the pictures. Once constructs had been drawn out of the initial picture, an opposite picture was asked for but again no specific title or element was given by myself. Further pictures were given freely by the pupil at any time during the sessions with a culminating fourth drawing often being offered as the second session closed. This individual case study approach became more person centred by allowing the individuals to offer a personal view of their life in school in a much less adult directed way.

This refinement of encouraging pupils to draw without restriction was to the point that some drawings were of out of school locations, included family

members and showed leisure type activities such as going to the beach and the fair. These were certainly outside the constraints of my initial thinking, but did allow the pupils much greater freedom to express themselves. Allowing pupils to draw freely was a significant development and step forward in the final piece of research. This then supported the development of a learning conversation based on personal construct psychology to occur, both as the pictures were being drawn and in a semi structured situation during the second session.

C) Drawings as methodology.

Is the use of pupils' drawings a justifiable way of supporting and facilitating conversations and discussions with primary aged pupils?

Thirteen pupils took part in the year 2/3 study and produced fifty drawings. The majority of which were able to support the conversational aspects of the research. Selected drawings are reproduced in Appendix 1.

Some drawings however contained little recognisable content and no people (eg Mason D3) and initially made facilitating a personal construct conversation very difficult. Other participants (eg Gareth D4 and Sarah D3 and D4) produced drawings which were full, creative and rich in content. These supported the conversations well. Some drawings were subtle and powerful and appeared to carry messages that might have been better dealt with in conjunction with a psycho-dynamic approach. Eg Woody with D3 ('A man shouting help') and his untitled D4 picture of a dark black quarter sun with nothing else and Kimberley in D2 where she was hiding and watching a group of children.

Initially the drawings were important in terms of being pieces of work produced by the young learners who participated in the research. Phinn (1987) emphasises the importance of allowing pupils to produce work which is at and represents their developmental level. This can then become

a document or record of their educational experiences. That is, as a product which represents their thoughts, actions and feelings.

Secondly the drawings were able to support and facilitate discussions and interactions between myself and the subjects. They became a medium through which the participants were able to reflect upon their experiences and thereby supported their individual conversational, learning and personality styles. This again operated on a number of different levels.

During the first sessions (drawing production and taped discussion) the drawing activity allowed pupils to produce free expressive work in a 'safe' environment. This was similar to an art therapy approach as in the work of Ravenette (1979) where he described his one off assessments as being both therapeutic and information gathering and talks in terms of 'to make a difference' to the lives of the young people he is working with.

During the second sessions the drawings again supported the discussions, but in a more direct way. They became a tool or vehicle in a deeper search for the pupil's own understanding of their educational experiences. Pupils appeared to use their drawings on these occasions in different ways.

Firstly some pupils easily remembered their drawings and titles as well as the initial themes and constructs they attached to them. This was seen in the work with Sarah, Kyli (A) and Michael where the drawings continued to represent the original thoughts and meanings attached to them from the first session. This stable or fixed use of the drawings I felt was a strength in terms of the depth reached in the PCP discussions. That is, the drawings represented strong beliefs, thoughts and feelings which remained relatively constant and were not lost or changed between discussions. This allowed deeper discussions and conversations to take place as the participants had stronger convictions which they were able to think about and justify. The constructs and themes that emerged were I feel therefore more consistent in these cases.

Secondly however some pupils recognised and remembered their drawings, but altered the themes and constructs they had originally placed on them. As we talked they created their new constructs and either added to (drew extra parts), changed (drew over figures etc) or took away from (rubbed out) their drawings. Happy 'smiley' faces were drawn over to become sad or miserable in order to fit with the construct that the pupil had decided to elaborate on. The drawings became a fluid vehicle for helping the discussions. This process was seen in the conversations with Danielle, Sheldon and Daniel and led to a more flexible, but no less deep search for understanding in the second session.

This level of use of the drawings in a sense reflected an element of personal construct theory in that with the passing of time a different 'picture' or understanding can be placed on a previous experience. The pupils were able to see things differently over time, further similar experiences or enlightenment and therefore move on and have a different understanding. Ravenette (1985) refers to searching for new information for old constructions or new constructions for old events. This may well have been an underdeveloped aspect of the research (seeing things differently with greater understanding) and might benefit from further exploration.

Thirdly some pupils such as Mason were unable to recognise their drawings as their own. They had forgotten that they had drawn them, forgot any meaning attached to them and so used them in only a superficial way to help them in their discussions. This was through adding to them as we talked possibly as a means of occupying themselves or as a distraction away from a focus on themselves. This again follows the approach used by Ravenette (1979) where pupils are able to draw whilst talking without focussing directly on or analysing the content of the pictures.

The drawings therefore served a number of purposes and supported the research by helping to gather information, providing a 'therapeutic'

opportunity and as an aid for developing the PCP conversations. This reflects the work of Ravenette (1997) as follows,

- * Using established drawings as a physical / concrete pictorial support (ie, the act of being there) to the discussion which then allowed the discussion to focus on something outside of the person. Rather than a face to face dialogue which can on occasions be a confrontational rather than a truly collaborative enterprise.

- * The presence of previous drawings can help to provide continuity and focus the session and then used as a prompt to completing a fourth or culminating drawing. This sense of a culminating drawing featured frequently in the research. It was as if the process of producing the early series of drawings and then talking about them allowed a greater understanding of the whole experience of the educational process which could then be represented in a final or all encompassing drawing. Gareth with his four sectioned picture 'Manners' (D4), Sarah with her 'Family together' (D4) and symbolic 'All together' (D5) and Danielle with her 'I full (feel) like co-prachn (cooperating)' (D4) all seemed to support the view that accumulated understandings could be brought together to make a culminating statement about educational and life experiences.

- * Changing the drawings to suit the discussion. This allowed flexibility to be added to the pupil's interpretation of their pictures to suit the moment and to move with the ebb and flow of the conversation. Danielle (D3) changed the mouth (from down to up) and the character from staff to pupil as she talked. Gareth (D4) wanted to construct his drawing as we talked and ended up with four pictures in one, each representing a theme of our as he reflected on our time together. Ricky (D2) wanted to include people being 'nice' and 'not nice' in the same picture, perhaps reflecting the complexity of situations and not wanting to express them as being just one element or the other.

* Having the drawings available as a prompt for the pupils thoughts, but not a focus for discussion. This was particularly useful for pupils who found the conversation difficult, either because of their poor verbal skills or their caution or quietness in this type of situation. Michael and Daniel responded well to using the drawings as prompts when they found the pure conversational aspects difficult to cope with.

D) Personal construct or learning conversations?

The study in year 1 collected two drawings based on the Ravenette (1980a) method of 'a drawing and its opposite'. Year 2/3 extended this method into a series of drawings and conversations based upon personal construct theory. The depth to which the pupils were able to engage with the study in terms of offering constructs reflects the relationship between the suitability of the research design and developmental stage of the pupils themselves.

In year 2/3 I asked each participant to produce a series of drawings which could offer the potential for a range of personal construct approaches. Initially they were asked for drawings and their opposites where bi-polar constructs can be elicited as developed by Ravenette (1980a). The addition of a third drawing provided the opportunity to introduce the triadic method of exploring pupil understandings as in work of Beaver (1996). The triadic exploration then led directly to the Landfield and Leitner (1980) characterisation technique. The series of drawings and conversations then led to a fourth drawing being produced which seemed to function as both a culminating and closing picture to the pupil data collection. This process allowed the pupils to be revisited to develop and extend their initial understandings and thoughts about themselves and school. The meanings attached to the initial drawings and the conversations could be validated by the pupils and there was a sense of continuity and extended engagement.

Development and the nature of constructs.

The nature and age of the participants reflected a certain stage in terms of their understanding, thinking and emotional development. They will still be in the process of growing and developing in terms of their ability to be in touch with their feelings, to express themselves and to appreciate the dynamic interactive nature of their relationships. This may be a limiting factor on their ability to fully enter into the research and offer meaningful constructs in terms of personal construct psychology. The pupils participated and contributed at an individual level where there was a continuum of ability to search for and describe the constructs which were relevant to them at the time.

All pupils drew and talked and provided personal information about their experiences. Some such as Ricky, Mason and Sheldon were able to contribute more at a semantic differential level whilst others such as Sarah, Kyli W and Danielle elaborated and engaged well at a personal construct level. The less articulate Michael and Daniel and the cautious Woody still managed to voice their views and provide meaningful information about their lives. Some cases seemed to indicate a note of caution however in terms of genuinely eliciting constructs and conveying deep thoughts and feelings. There may be a developmental continuum or nature of construct development which governs the level at which some children of this age can effectively engage and contribute to this type of approach.

Beaver (1996) refers to exploring the model world of the child and coming to constructive understandings whilst still using the conceptual structure of personal construct psychology. He feels that using methods which are less dependent on the intricacies of spoken language allow the exploration of the child's world beyond the superficial level. These methods which use a range of different processing and communicating channels can still help to come to a shared understanding by exploring similarities and differences through represented themes.

All the participants in this study were able to engage at a level which allowed them to describe their experiences. Some found it difficult however to reflect on how these experiences might have been different or how they might have a new view and understanding of themselves. This may have been due to the design of the research or the way in which I asked questions. In a sense the research remains unfinished in that the participants need to view and hear my interpretations of what they gave me. This should occur in order to share understandings, explore possible misunderstandings and to validate or challenge my interpretations of the data. This process could help them to begin to have a further appreciation of themselves as learners and young people and introduce the idea that because there are always other interpretations then change in their own thinking may be possible. There is perhaps now even a greater need to give them the opportunity to engage in another learning conversation to continue the cycle of constructing and reconstructing.

These concerns raise questions regarding my beliefs about how young children think, feel and behave. Firstly are they able to recognise that they have a range of feelings which they depict in their drawings and bring out in their conversations? Secondly are they able to effectively get in touch with those emotions and then describe them? A personal construct viewpoint would be that all children experience differently in different situations and therefore have a range of emotions attached to those experiences. The participants may not be used to being asked for their views and opinions let alone encouraged to talk about their feelings. They could also be unaware therefore that talking about them may be useful, particularly with negative emotions such as jealousy, loneliness, sadness and unhappiness. This is in the light that some participants tended to have a limited expressive language ability and vocabulary to describe their emotions. A useful development in the study might have been to explore the range of language they used to describe their experiences and to seek deeper clarification of their understanding. This exercise could be done across individuals or within groups.

Considering different methods.

Having a limited expressive vocabulary certainly seems to be crucial in terms of talking about feelings etc, although exploring these areas can be done in a number of different ways as this research has shown. Could these methods be used with other groups of children who are more disadvantaged in terms of their verbal or cognitive skills, but equally entitled to express a view about their school lives? This method has worked with four participants who were described as having moderate learning difficulties and later transferred to a special school.

The research did work, but did it work in better ways than other methods. The majority of examples of research in this area still focus on purely asking pupils verbally and some even seek to explore the issue with questionnaires. Tisdall and Dawson (1994) used audio and video recording to facilitate interpretation when they interviewed pupils with special educational needs. They still relied on asking questions verbally despite acknowledging the linguistic and literacy difficulties of some of their sample.

A more enlightened approach was made by Hayden and Ward (1996) with primary aged children. They developed an approach which included a booklet of pictures which allowed participants to point and select their preferences in response to questions. This included activities where pupils ticked faces, described feelings about situations or actions and filled in thought bubbles as well as responding to and answering direct questions. They acknowledge that having a booklet to tick and draw in allowed the children to have a practical involvement in the exercises. They also included in their method a series of pictures which facilitated a general discussion about school and associated feelings and thoughts.

It is apparent therefore that a range of methods and approaches to eliciting pupil views is likely to be more successful than merely asking. Ravenette

(1997) page 285 gives good cause for using drawings in particular as he says,

“It is a worthwhile assumption that a child’s drawings will point to aspects of knowing which exist at lower levels of awareness than that of verbal articulation”.

Junior aged pupils may or may not have expressive language difficulties, but they are at a developmental level which is best engaged through a multi-sensory approach. That is, where they can talk, draw, tick boxes, select by pointing and interact at a level which accesses as many senses as possible. Dalton (1996) advocates a nonverbal approach such as drawings to eliciting constructs with young children. She states that when they are asked to verbalise their constructions they rely on concrete constructs which are loosely organised and lopsided and that there should always be a check on what we think they mean through other methods such as non verbal communication.

Some drawings which appeared to have limited content and potential were still able to facilitate discussions about life in school and relationships between peers in particular. This may have been because the majority of the pupils recognised their work and were impressed that I had thought highly enough of them to keep their pictures and have them readily available in the second session. There was a lengthy time between the two sessions for some pupils and this could have led to a lack of continuity and interest in the study. However the reappearance of their original drawings served to re-engage most pupil and make that crucial link in terms of continuity. I do feel that the time delay on reflection could be a weakness in the research and would wish for much closer spaced sessions in future work. Continuity may also have been maintained in that I continued to visit the school between the sessions in my generic role and frequently saw and spoke to the participants who often asked when would I be seeing them again.

I feel that this research has approached the question of accessing pupils' views in a multi-sensory way which allowed the participants to engage in both a verbal and non-verbal way. I feel it may well be unreasonable to expect young children to engage with research at an adult type level, that is purely through conversation. It may be however that verbal language is the strongest medium for reaching personal constructs at a truly meaningful level and that the participants in the research by the nature of their language skills and developmental level will be disadvantaged. Young children however (and everyone else) communicate through a range of senses and through their behaviour. It is only reasonable that educationalists should provide a range of ways for children to communicate their thoughts and feelings.

E) Ethical considerations.

In this study it has been paramount to consider the ethical aspects of working with children. Thomas and O'Kane (1998) feel that it is important to consider the power in the relationships between adults and children where there is a giving and receiving of information. Further, serious thought should be given as to whether and with who any sensitive or confidential information can be shared.

In any research there should be an attempt to overcome the methodological and ethical difficulties in exploring these sensitive areas with children. In this study I asked the pupils to tell me about themselves, their experiences and the significant and powerful people in their lives. Experiencing certain events may have led them to feel uneasy, embarrassed, unhappy and possibly even scared. The subsequent discussions in the research may have raised or touched on those feelings again and this should be acknowledged.

I feel that an important element of the research design was to focus on 'how things could be better' for the pupil. This introduced the idea that by thinking about possibilities and change then the pupil could be empowered to effect positive change.

Thomas and O'Kane (1998) consider that in order to overcome some of these problem it is important to use a participatory approach throughout. This approach recognises the child as a social being and allows them to participate on their own terms and to discuss decision making matters that are relevant to their lives as they see them. This occurred in this research by working with the pupils and co-constructing the concept map, by asking them to draw at their developmental level, by using a semi-structured conversational style in the interviews and by revisiting to talk with them on their terms.

In the process of establishing contact with children as research subjects and following the participatory approach I tried to adhere to the following principles.

The principle of consent.

At the outset I sought the active agreement of the pupil and the passive agreement of their parent. All pupils involved in the study were at stage 3 of the Code of Practice for special educational needs and therefore parents had previously agreed to the involvement of the education support services. Parental consent was still sought however specifically for this research by personal letter from myself through the school. An opportunity sample of selected pupils were individually invited to join the research. They were informed about the nature of the study and what they would be asked to do and talk about. They were encouraged to discuss this with their parents and teachers.

Hart (1992) recognises that children can consent to being involved in research at a number of different levels and uses the metaphor of an eight rungged ladder to describe the various levels. Hart (1992) considers that there are three basic levels of involvement and within those levels there are the eight identifiable rungs. These range from just being involved and 'manipulated' at the level of token paternalism through to genuine informed participation.

This research I feel goes beyond Hart's (1992) early rungs of manipulation, decoration and tokenism and stands on the rung where the pupil is both consulted and informed. Here the research is adult designed and there is shared decision making with the children. This does not reach the next level where the research is child designed and directed and where the child shares decisions with the adult. I feel this model also reflects the approach described by Meighan (1990) regarding the conceptions that teachers have of learners. These range from learners being seen as 'registers' of information through to learners as independent and democratic explorers.

I believe this research was child centred and open to receiving the true views of the pupils, despite not being driven by the participants in terms of them developing the research questions and controlling the design. There was however a real sense of cooperative learning in our conversations and coming to a shared understanding. There is a need however to plan a return to the pupils and the school to validate the total accumulated and integrated data. The second conversation assisted the validation of the drawings and the first conversations, but the hermeneutic cycle could be continued by revisited the participants with the complete analysed data as evidence.

The principle of participation.

This encompasses the understanding that the children's participation could be withdrawn at any time and derives from the principle of consent. Were the participants in a true position to give informed consent and to have a genuine informed choice as to whether they took part in the study or not? Was it a realistic option that they could they 'opt out' or withdraw from the study at any time if they wished? The context of school often expects a certain level of conformity from pupils without question. Parental permission was obtained and the pupils were individually consulted and invited to join the research, however the likelihood of them conforming without question I feel would still have been high even if they had not been truly invited. Pupils can sometimes agree to take part in activities without a full understanding of what is going to happen. They may be drawn by

novelty and curiosity, an opportunity to escape the routine of the normal timetable in school or by a genuine desire to enter the research and voice their opinions.

A useful development could have been to return to the pupils and ask them what they thought was the purpose of our drawing and conversational sessions. This could have been done shortly after me seeing them perhaps by a third person such as Gill and via a short tick off questionnaire or rating scale such as the Salmon (1995) line, which is also used in PCP work with young children. This process could add an element of evaluation in the research and give valuable feedback about my methods and delivery as both a researcher and practitioner.

This aspect of empowering pupils with a choice about taking part and at which level they wish to contribute is linked to creating an atmosphere where pupils feel able to express themselves freely, with the expectation that they will be both listened to and taken notice of. The pupils were asked at the beginning of the research and at the start of each session if they wished to be involved. This was to ensure that there was a sense that informed consent was an ongoing and continual process which needed to be revisited throughout the research. I also made periodic checks with Gill and the class teachers to ensure that the study and my involvement were not proving counterproductive in terms of the pupils classroom learning. It was inevitable that some sessions involved pupils coming out of the main classrooms as well as being withdrawn from their special needs timetable.

The principle of choice.

This referred to offering as much choice as possible as to how the pupils participated within the research framework. This occurred by encouraging them to contribute at their own developmental level by drawing freely and taking part in open ended discussions. I aimed to develop participant friendly methods such as drawing and talking which are common in

schools, but extended them to where the pupil chose the content. The style became that of informant and listener rather than teacher and pupil.

The pupils were encouraged to contribute at their own level in terms of the number, content and quality of their drawings and with their own vocabulary and expressive language in the conversations. Their contributions were not however open to the usual scrutiny and comment from their peers and staff often common in school situations. This element of choice reflected the unique contribution of each individual participant and influenced the direction and content of the individual sessions.

Meeting individual needs..

Thomas and O'Kane (1998) believe that to enhance participatory research it is important to use a variety of verbal and non-verbal techniques. This helps to meet the needs and preferences of individuals and assists in breaking down the imbalance of power relations. I feel this was achieved by selecting the instruments of drawing and semi structured conversations which enabled the children to choose the subject matter and specific content for discussion. This in turn allowed the research to follow the children's understandings of questions and concepts. This gave them greater control over the agenda, allowed more time and space to talk about issues that concerned them and the work they presented remained open to their own understanding, interpretation and explanation. I also tried not to ask any questions to which I already knew the answers and felt that the pupils were aware of this. This helped them to develop their own line of questioning and created an atmosphere in which there were no right or wrong answers, but just opinions and views.

By returning to see each participant on a second occasion it gave them the chance to review, refine, develop and change their contributions. This created situations where the children were able to reinterpret research questions and do further work on the material brought from their previous session. They had the freedom to talk, to answer, to not talk or answer, to

talk alone and confidentially and to choose the direction of the conversation and interview arrangements. This in itself created a difficulty in that some pupils such as Daniel, Woody, Ricky and Mason all came with their own agenda and did their best to stick to it. This led to a certain uneasiness in myself during the early days of the research where I felt under pressure to collect data which related directly to the research questions. As I developed a more expansive view of the process of research I was able to balance the natural ebb and flow of the participants efforts and conversations with my own need to search for their views of school. The research itself may have aimed to sit on a particular rung of Hart's (1992) ladder, but the participants sat on and probably spanned a number of rungs which reflect a continuum in terms of their ability to contribute to and enter into the research.

An extract from my research diaries September 1998 (Appendix 4) illustrates my anxiety about data collection as the research process begins.

"I have a real sense of the research starting as I negotiate access to the school and pupils ... and this represents a positive move away from thinking that research is purely about data collection ... Yet there is still a sense of being unsure and wanting to get the drawings and conversations taped. This reflects my insecurity and lack of confidence in that I feel I may not end up with what I set out to obtain"

This position still preys on my mind when I meet Mason as my diary entry on March 8th 1999 shows (Appendix 4).

"Today I feel I have had the most difficult PCP interview. Mason brought his own agenda and stuck to it. I feel I have been unsuccessful in that I hadn't effectively used his drawings in our conversations and collected any real data"

Yet on reflection in January 2000 (Appendix 4) as I read through and type the hand written diaries I comment that I recognise the need for anxiety, self doubt and anticipation in the research process. Also that I now feel that this

uncertainty was healthy in that I needed to be open minded about how and what data is collected in a qualitative study. Also with regard to some of the difficult interviews I reflect and write,

“that no matter how the study goes there will always be data and it’s up to the researcher to make sense of it and use it in an informative way”.

Naturalistic inquiry accepts that participants will have their own views and agendas and these can cloud as well as illuminate the research questions.

Searching for the pupil voice was a legitimate aim which was ostensibly still achieved, but my position and my values perhaps controlled and contrived the ‘answer’ to be given only within relatively restrictive guidelines. The process by which I structured and asked the research questions may be influenced by my values. This raises the issue of power relationships within research. A dilemma for all researchers may be that in the construction and asking of questions in order to seek pupils’ views there may be a sense that they have not genuinely been empowered to have a voice.

The issue of power.

In year 1 I formulated the research questions, coordinated the method, directed the data collection and controlled the analysis. This may not have been sympathetic to pupils who either found the activities difficult, misunderstood my explanations or were just unable to engage with the research. The restructuring of the design in year 2/3 to collect data both verbally and non-verbally may have gone some way to helping pupils to enter the research in a range of ways and at their own level.

Any attempt to obtain pupils’ personal views as valid reflections of their learning experiences will raise concerns about the power relationship and any reactivity between the participant and myself as researcher. Pupils in schools are normally taught or seen in groups and the nature of individual

work will naturally change the dynamics of the interactions. Pupils engaged in individual work may carry the stigma of needing extra help or having to sit separately following misbehaviour. This was a common occurrence in the school in the study. Did I reinforce this perception by working individually with pupils already labelled as having special needs? Also does this link to the theme described by Oliver (1992) that researchers often research the 'resourceless' or 'voiceless' who as a marginalised or underprivileged group must 'need our patronising support or help'. Did I take every effort to ensure that the participants truly understood what we were doing and thereby gave informed consent which then allowed me to represent their true voice?

I feel there was a genuine attempt to empower pupils within the structure of the research. They produced their own work without interference or pressure from other pupils. My presence may have added different pressures however in that individual work with pupils can be quite intense and there is little opportunity to avoid being the centre of attention. They were however able to contribute at their own level and produce pictures which were confidential, anonymous and without scrutiny or judgement by anyone else. It was important to ensure and remind the participants that our work was confidential and that the activities of drawing and having conversations was to help us explore their views about school and in the words of Ravenette (1980a) 'to tell us something about yourself which you had not thought of before'.

If they found the task confusing or difficult I asked them just to 'do your best'. If they finished the drawings rather quickly then I was ready to engage them in a conversation right away. This sense of naturally moving into a conversation may have helped them to feel they had completed the drawing task satisfactorily. I felt that the sessions had encouraged a high level of free expression and that the pupils produced a rich and abundant amount of data which reflected their efforts and a feeling of genuine trust and rapport. Pupils were able for example to draw and talk about certain

sensitive issues which they might not have been able express directly to teachers or other staff in the school. Sheldon talked about being 'excluded' by his class teacher, Michael expressed his loneliness at having no friends and Daniel conveyed deep worries about being bullied and 'set upon'.

The central aspect of using children's work helped to keep the study child centred, although this was produced in response to my requests rather than being initiated freely or within the context of a 'normal' learning situation. Phinn (1987) is in favour of allowing children completely free expression with regard to their work. She feels that it is essential to encourage children who in particular experience learning difficulties to produce a range of work at length with confidence and enjoyment. She concludes that researchers therefore must forego any attempt to impose constraints on pupils and focus initially on the thoughts and feelings they are endeavouring to express by using their work as a focus.

This research worked individually with the pupils where personal views were given without the influence of other peers. There was neither the group pressure to spend longer producing the drawings and during the conversations there was no competition or contradiction from other pupils. There was also a need to consider my impact on the process and if the pupils perceived me in the role of a teacher or researcher. I may have acquired a similar status to that of teachers in that I was introduced as Mr and treated by the pupils as if I was a member of staff.

This carries implications in terms of the power relationship between the adult and the child and the subsequent expectations of the pupils in terms of conformity and the giving of their views. Armstrong (1993) et al examined the role of children in assessments and found that their beliefs about the process and the professionals involved had a significant impact upon their responses. The pupils may have had a conflict therefore between being asked and invited to be participants and co-researchers and producing drawings and answering questions for a person from outside the school.

Pupils may have felt a need to conform and give me the answers they thought I might have expected. A balance was needed therefore between creating an atmosphere where pupils gave their views freely and confidently and the constraints of time and the research design.

F) Conclusion.

The validity and reliability of the research methodology could be improved by aiming to bring the pupils closer to the Hart (1992) model of co-researchers. Here they could be directly involved in the design and the development of the research questions. They could be encouraged to make informed choices and take a more active part in determining their own level of participation, as well as being involved in the data collection, analysis and interpretation. This may help them to express their genuine voice about their experiences.

It is also important to consider my exit from the research which should be as sensitive as the research entry. I need to recognise the potential impact of my work on individuals and the school.

A further consideration is when it is ethical to destroy the data and should this be at the end of the study on submission of the thesis? This would ensure confidentiality, but would stop other researchers having access to information in order to replicate the research, to check for accuracy or to try for another form of analysis.

CHAPTER 7.

REFLECTIONS and CONCLUSIONS.

A) Introduction.

This chapter begins with the reflexive process from a personal and professional point of view, followed by the tensions and weaknesses in the research which lead to implications for educational practice and further research considerations.

B) Reflection.

Wilkinson (1988) considers that the process of reflexivity involves thinking about oneself and thinking about one's research at a number of different levels. At a personal level I must consider my individuality as a researcher and how my personal interests and values have influenced the process of research. This activity reveals rather than conceals my level of personal involvement and engagement. The idea of 'ourselves as our own resources' emerges from this process.

At a functional level reflexivity involves a continual critical examination of the practice / process of research to reveal its assumptions, values and biases.

Finally reflexivity at a disciplinary level involves thinking and questioning macro issues such as research methodology and underlying educational and psychological theories.

Research within the naturalistic paradigm acknowledges the mutual influence that the researcher and the participants have on each other and that in order to explore relevant issues for the participants I must be involved in the activity. The position of the researcher is therefore of central importance within the study. It is essential to acknowledge that I have brought prior assumptions and biases to the research resulting in researcher

bias and reactivity and that I have both influenced and been influenced by the research process.

The writing of the dissertation and the research journal are part of the process of interpretive activity. It is through writing that I have come to know what I did not know before and of saying something about what was not said before. The writings represent myself as much as they represent the area studied.

A Personal and Professional perspective.

A reflexive account should consider why I choose this area for study, for what purpose and for whose benefit. Altruistically I may feel that the ultimate benefit must be for the pupils involved, but asking why have I done this research is like asking a mountain climber why they climb the mountain. This implies a problem to be conquered or overcome, but perhaps the journey and the decisions taken during that journey help to provide the enlightenment which I feel all explorers seek.

During this study I have learnt that qualitative research is a continual process which is in a constant state of flux and development. There is a dynamic interactive construction and understanding of the participants worlds which is reflected in my own development and understanding as a researcher. The research is both 'here and now' as well as being part of a journey. The following quote from Fisher and Hicks (1985) page 158 reflects my thinking.

"The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths to it are not found but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination".

The idea of the research process being a journey where there is a search for aspects of personal and professional fulfilment is captured in the following quote from by Kipling in his poem The Explorer.

'Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated - so:'
"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges -
"Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go ! "

The Explorer

Rudyard Kipling (1898)

I have always tried to select areas for study which have a personal interest and a professional relevance for me. I have experienced on a number of occasions the powerful effect of using drawings to explore my own and other people's conscious and unconscious feelings and thoughts. This together with my view that research should be child centred has led me to this present work. During my teaching in a special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties I developed an understanding of the importance of the relationship and interaction between individuals who jointly construct a reality or understanding. That is, knowledge is a construction between individuals within a specific context, which is open to change with different interpretations as circumstances alter.

As a researcher I feel I am in a different position to that of a teacher in terms of asking questions. Donaldson (1978) considers that teachers tend to ask questions that they already know the answers to. This is in order to find out if the pupils know the answers. The pupils in turn try to 'figure out' what the teacher expects in what Donaldson refers to as 'human sense' terms and therefore they enter into an elaborate guessing game of what is required. As the researcher however I tried to give an impression that I was not seen as the expert, but as someone who did not know the answer and wanted to find out something from the pupil. The roles of adult and pupil were effectively reversed where the pupils were the more knowledgeable

persons in the relationship. Their explanations then had a sharing and informative function which helped them to make public their understanding.

This aspect of listening with a purpose has developed my skills in working with young children who sometimes need to be asked in different ways and given both the time and opportunity to tell what they think. Extracts from my research diary in Appendix 4 document my self doubt and the difficulties of negotiating access to children and asking them about their lives. References are made to trying to get it right and make sense of what I had been given in the short time I spent with the participants and ensuring that they were better off for the experience also added to the anxiety. Nevertheless as my role as researcher and practitioner merged I was able to transfer those skills of listening and exploring to my general practice. The research method has therefore added to my general tools of working with young children.

Conflicting roles within school. Researcher or generic psychologist ?

My role within the school has changed during the research. This may have been due to the increased frequency of my visits, the nature and process of my work and the increased contact with the staff particularly in the special needs department.

There was an increased familiarity and friendliness with the way I was received by the pupils in the study and by the groups of pupils in the special needs department. This was during both lesson time and break times often when 'alternative play' was occurring. The pupils were open and friendly to the point that many of them wanted to know when I would be working with them. This was from the pupils in the research, the pupils who I had seen in my general work and from other pupils in the special needs department who I was unlikely to do any direct work with. They just seemed to know that 'that's what I do', to see children one by one in a separate room attached to the special needs department.

In the planned sessions with Gill that following the work with the participants there developed a sense that I would be able to offer quick feedback to the special needs staff. This resulted in a conversation about the pupil and a general discussion about other matters, but did not fulfil my needs within the research. This misunderstanding may have come from me not making their purpose clear and they fell into the trap of following my usual generic practice. These sessions moved in many directions with Gill having her own agenda usually around her role and the function of the special needs department within the school. This again was a useful direction in terms of my generic role but did not always allow me to remain solely within the context of my research and gain a further understanding about my cases. This reflected the tension of being a practitioner in the school yet being an outsider as researcher. Some staff continued to perceive me in my generic role and this confusion may have stemmed from my lack of clarity of my role from the outset of the research.

There were also increased expectations from the school senior management team as to my availability since I was in school more often than would normally be expected. I was often met by the head-teacher as I arrived for a research session and expected to discuss whole school issues or matters regarding special needs. This generally was quite useful, but it eroded the time I had set aside, disrupted my plans and clouded my thinking regarding my role. Perhaps the pupils were not the only ones who were unclear about what I was doing in school in terms of the research. It might be that I was not explicit enough in describing my roles and availability in the early stages of the research. Diary entries in Appendix 4 indicate my growing confusion between roles which became more acute when a number of the participants were referred to me through my generic work. I question whether the two roles are separate and different as the study progressed they began to become merged and less easily defined.

The whole school was at the same time moving towards a significant change in the light of their poor academic results. The Education

Development Services for the LEA were in the process of working with the school in a collaborative project towards improving the academic results and the quality of teaching and learning. I attended a whole day meeting in my generic role to discuss ways of developing the school and I was particularly concerned at the lack of representation regarding the pupils 'voice' in general and the special needs department in particular. There was also no representation and little reference to the parental perspective. I raised this theme in my discussions with Gill regarding the individual cases I had seen. Perhaps I was also guilty of changing the agenda of these meetings and giving the wrong messages about my role.

There was a feeling that the school needed to move forward in terms of the quality of learning without acknowledging the role and function of the special needs department. There seemed to be a lack of understanding in relation to what 'resources', skills and experiences the pupils brought or didn't bring with them to school in terms of their social and emotional development. A senior member of staff was heard to say at the day conference that 'some pupils come to school without ever having had a conversation', surely I would argue a need therefore to teach them the skills of conversing and giving their views. These meetings provided an opportunity for me to raise the voice and views of the pupils in a forum which included senior staff, class teachers and school governors.

These conflicts of my role in school and the changing school dynamics served to keep me aware of the dynamic and interpretative nature of my work.

C) Weaknesses in the research and subsequent changes.

Naturalistic inquiry brings its own difficulties such as its unfolding design, the dynamic context and the aim to provide accurate descriptions of pupils and their views within a relatively short time.

True participation by the pupils in terms of Hart's (1992) ladder could have seen them being encouraged to develop their own research questions and to help design and carry out the project. This could have led to a greater sense of ownership and problem solving as a group of children doing research together, rather than a series of individuals who may or may not have been aware of the other pupils in the research. I saw the participants as a group albeit not a labelled homogenous group, but a group brought together by age, location and school classification. For me they had a group identity both as participants and as pupils on the special needs register, but I never really found out if they shared the same understanding.

This mismatch between my understanding and that of the participants could be a naive researcher position which should certainly inform any future work. I could have brought the group together at the beginning and developed a sense of identity and corporate informed consent which could have been developed in later sessions. Informing the group about the nature of the research and asking for permission to do it in their school would have been an interesting development. If I am truly interesting in respecting and regarding the rights of the children as pupils then I could have asked their permission to work in their school. A sense of group identity would also have allowed me to close the research in a more structured and measured way thereby helping to clarify my role with the participants and with the staff.

A weakness in the data collection process was the length of time between the drawing sessions and the follow up PCP discussions. This delay was useful in allowing time to process and analyse and generate hypotheses about the world of the participant, but it did lengthen the gap between the pupil sessions and run the risk of causing discontinuity in the research. Some pupils, possibly due to this time delay did fail to recognise their drawings, the titles they gave them and the constructs they originally placed on them.

There still remains a gap in the research cycle where I should return to the pupils in order to help them both validate my view of their contributions and also to help them to have more positive perceptions of themselves and my involvement. PCP theory is constructed around the idea that change is possible. One intended aspect of this research was to help pupils reflect upon their experiences through a personal construct interview and develop new constructions or understandings for some of their difficulties.

Ravenette (1980a) refers to clarifying the individual's dilemma and promoting the individual's psychological growth. This may have been an undeveloped aspect in this study and should be considered in any future research. This could be done by returning to the pupils for a further conversation in order to seek respondent validation and would be possible in a longer research programme.

Should time have allowed it might also have been useful to take the research findings into another context. An opportunity to complete non-participant naturalistic observation during the unstructured times of the school day could be a development. This could challenge what was 'given' to me by the pupils in the context of our 'closed' individual sessions and either confirm or conflict with my interpretation. Warnock (1978) referred to special needs being relative to the context in which they occur. To observe peer interactions within the context of the playground (which is where the participants say that most of the important interactions took place) would place the evidence in a new and more natural frame.

This could be supported with discussions, conversations and interviews with pupils within the playground context. It would be interesting to note what observations and comments the pupils would make of the activities in which they were actually taking part. Was there a tension in my research where I attempted to give pupils quality time in a confidential situation to listen to their 'voice', whilst taking them out of the context in which they were experiencing any difficulties. In effect I was not listening to their voice within the context or situation of them having their experiences.

Another aspect missing in the research is that of the voice of other significant people in the pupils' lives. I initially intended this to be the A/SenCo, but my work with her developed into an opportunity to return the voice and views of the pupils to the school. The absence of the views of the pupils' parents and class teachers remains a gap and is acknowledged.

D) Implications for educational practice.

All research has an implied assumption that it will have an impact on practice. This can occur in a number of different ways as described by Mann et al (1997) page 7.

“Research cannot make the decisions for policy makers and others concerned with improving the quality of education in our schools and colleges. Nor can it by itself bring about change. However, it can create a better basis for decisions, by providing information and explanations about educational practice and by challenging ideas and assumptions.”

This study has provided information in a textual form about pupils' lives which can act as a catalyst for change within the school as an institution. The external 'wide angle view' of the researcher can contrast with the participants insider view. This contrast can inform and promote opportunities for examining the roles and values of the school as an organisation and the individuals within the organisation. It can also broaden the understanding of the way in which the hidden and formal curriculum are delivered. In this study the focus has been on how individuals see their school lives and how we listen to children. The information gathered can help to inform school policies and practices on recognising that pupils do have views, are capable of expressing them and given the right forum can give important messages about their experiences of school.

Listening to children.

An outcome of the research therefore is to encourage and develop a growing awareness on the part of some teachers of the importance of listening and responding to the views and opinions of the pupils. The value of listening, can as Reid (1987) feels help pupils to feel included in their school community. To ask is to acknowledge they exist and have a viewpoint and can help them to recognise they are members of the school. Listening by teachers can inform them about the culture they live and work in from the point of view of the learners and perhaps tell them something about themselves that they did not know before. Wade and Moore (1993) in their work with primary teachers found that only a third took account of the views of pupils and that the majority regarded consultation with pupils to be time consuming, valueless and irrelevant and leading to the creation of problems. This current research can help to inform teachers that listening to pupils is valuable and can provide important information about practices in school.

Salmon (1995) values the importance of teachers listening to pupils in order to inform them about their own practice. That is, how they are perceived by their pupils governs how their teaching is 'heard' and is a crucial element in them having credibility.

This research with pupils on the additional/special needs register illustrates the importance of listening to this seldom heard and under represented group. The techniques used have expanded the ways of communicating with pupils who are defined as having emotional and social difficulties and underlined the importance of equality in listening to all children. The technique has value in that it facilitated good quality conversation which can provide the basis for further work. This type of research can help the school to understand pupil actions, reactions and responses in the context of their daily life at school. It initially gave much information about individual experiences, but also raised whole school issues. The pupils were also able to draw and discuss aspects of their more general lives which

extended beyond just school issues. Pupils at this age may not easily separate out the various worlds they inhabit and the roles they play, but were able to provide a rich picture about their lives. They may actually be unaware of what the role of a learner is like and what the expectations for behaviour are. This can have implications for the school in pro-actively teaching children how to be learners rather than expecting them to develop those skills and abilities naturally.

Pupils as resources.

This theme of pupils being resources raises the issue of how far do school based initiatives focus on harnessing peer culture and influence, rather than just suppressing them? The pupil culture can be a rich source of information about the school which can inform the practice of the pastoral system and the importance of extracurricular activities. Information gained may highlight individual social and emotional needs and reflect the way in which the school either meets or doesn't meet those needs.

One outcome of the research is that the pupils portrayed a positive attitude to school in general with an overriding sense that relationships in the playground were of far greater importance than any other aspect of their learning. Despite this positive outcome the playground was still a potential area for negative peer group interactions. The school staff could take the opportunity to build on this pupil knowledge and to further develop their understanding of the dynamics and social interaction of the playground. Focus type groups could help the pupils to be seen as a resource for generating greater understanding of the culture of the school.

Kinder and Wilkin (1997) in their work on pupil perceptions found that to help counter negative peer influence the following systems were considered important. Firstly the role of peer mentors. This was not referred to directly in this study although pupils were well aware of the nature of supporting and helping out other children. Secondly the alternative or extra-curricular provision. This was mentioned frequently in the study

where the status of the special needs room and the provision of 'alternative play' were certainly important in avoiding peer conflict. Thirdly the provision of specialist school-based staff offering a befriending role and/or facilitating peer support. This was embedded in the way in which a number of pupils referred to the support in the special needs department. Fourthly the development of anti bullying initiatives, including assertiveness techniques. These may be areas for school based investigation when considering future research.

To talk to peer groups about friendships and conflict resolution within the context of those relationships could also be a way of checking if my understandings and interpretations had a 'ring of truth' about them. Group understandings may well be different from individual perceptions and perspectives. Focus type groups for primary pupils may support this approach. Pupils may be unaware that they are capable of generating their own problem solving strategies for both themselves and others peers.

Reflecting the school culture.

A further implication to inform school policy and practice was that pupils were free to comment in their own words and were not constrained to the language or vocabulary of the instrument. Their language reflected an understanding of the social order of situations both at school and at home. For example from the data collected it was possible to observe the following thinking in practice.

- * The moral order of school in the way in which people behave and should be expected to behave.
- * Aspects of common sense.
- * That life was often seen globally without a distinction between home and school.
- * Through this process the pupils were recalling individual memories, but as a group were recreating collective memories of school experiences.

At an individual level the pupils showed a good understanding of the rich experiences they encounter in the playground. They were able to think through different ways of developing and maintaining relationships and had a wide range of strategies for avoiding and resolving conflict. Some pupils showed a reliance on the self to manage difficult situations and thereby take some personal responsibility whilst at the same time being able to know when to seek help from a range of other people. These personal skills could be recognised and transferred into a whole school understanding. There could be a whole school focus on recognising the importance of children getting on with each other in the playground in order to promote meaningful working relationships in the classroom.

Conclusion.

The overriding impression gained was of the unique contribution from each individual pupil. The very different combinations of perceptions, emotional responses and abilities to reflect on their educational experiences underpins the need to treat all pupils first and foremost as unique individuals in their own right.

This was despite how similar their special needs might appear to be in terms of their categorisation on the special needs register. This would have whole school implications in that all pupils are equal in terms of rights and opportunities and are entitled to be treated with respect regardless of their status as learners. Pupils with special needs should have the same opportunities and chances as any other individuals within school.

In the dynamic ever changing population and context of any school community there should still be a need to identify, address and constantly review the perceptions and evaluations of its pupils as individual human beings.

E) Conclusion.

On typing this thesis and examining my research diaries I find that a quote from T. S. Eliot (1944) in the Four Quartets - Little Gidding has helped me to focus on the process and the developments of the research. He wrote,

‘We shall not cease from our exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, but remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning’;

This encapsulates the idea that we have to travel across an area from a number of different directions in order to ‘know’ it properly. That is, to return to a place we thought we knew and yet know it from a different perspective. Perhaps this is part of the journey to the completion of this research, not only to know the data and the research process better, but also to know myself better in both professional and personal terms.

The pupils were able to make a unique contribution as individuals and the research took place in a particular context and time. The voices in this research are original and showed that the pupils had a view, were able to express it and wanted to be heard despite not being used to being asked. I also felt that the school were not used to asking pupils for their views in general and are unsure of what to do when they have heard them. The very act of asking therefore in this context is new and what is heard is new.

Wetton and McWhirter (1998) believe that the process of asking children about their experiences can provide a personal and relevant starting point for helping teachers to understand the child’s own logical construction of meaning. This can lead to curriculum development strategies which value the children’s knowledge and understanding and the sense they make of the world. I believe this also applies to the hidden curriculum and the child’s

understanding of their social experiences as shown in this research. There is an opportunity to build on this pupil knowledge and understanding.

F) Postscript.

This is a brief update on the pupils who took part in the research.

- * Michael, Daniel, Shane and Mason all transferred to a local 'special' day school designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

- * Sheldon was permanently excluded in year 5 and received 'out of school tuition' during year 6. A special school placement is being planned.

- * Ricky received a statement of special educational needs for emotional and behavioural difficulties on transfer to secondary school.

- * Gareth and Woody moved to another area and transfer schools.

- * Danielle moved to another primary school one term before transfer to secondary school, due to risk of being permanently excluded

- * Kyli, A., Kyli, W and Sarah all stay at school and transfer to secondary school.

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T.S.C.Maxwell.

M9597887.

APPENDICES.

**In what way can children's drawings together
with a personal construct discussion help to
illuminate our understanding of their views
of their educational experiences?**

Doctor of Education (EdD).

Submitted March 2001.

APPENDICES.

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APPENDIX 1.

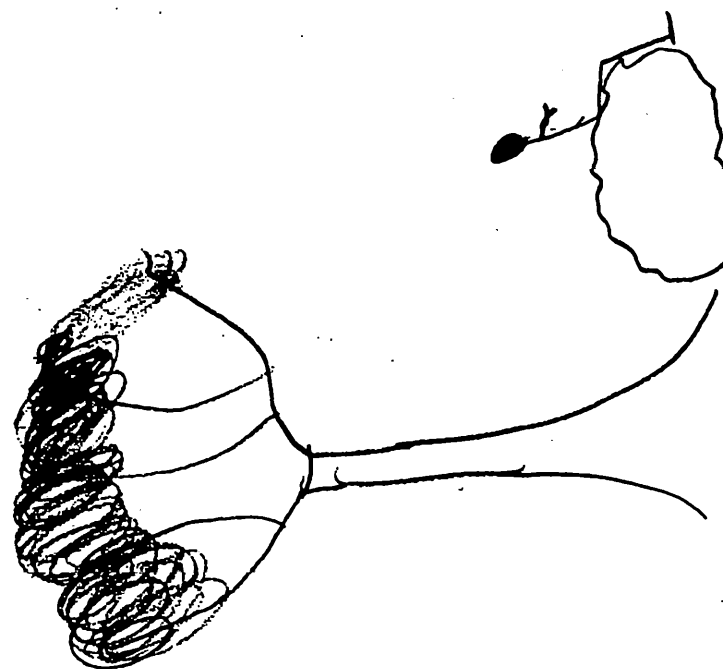
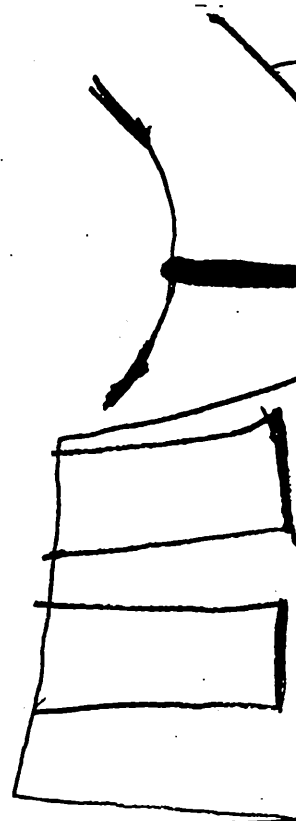
THE PUPILS' DRAWINGS .

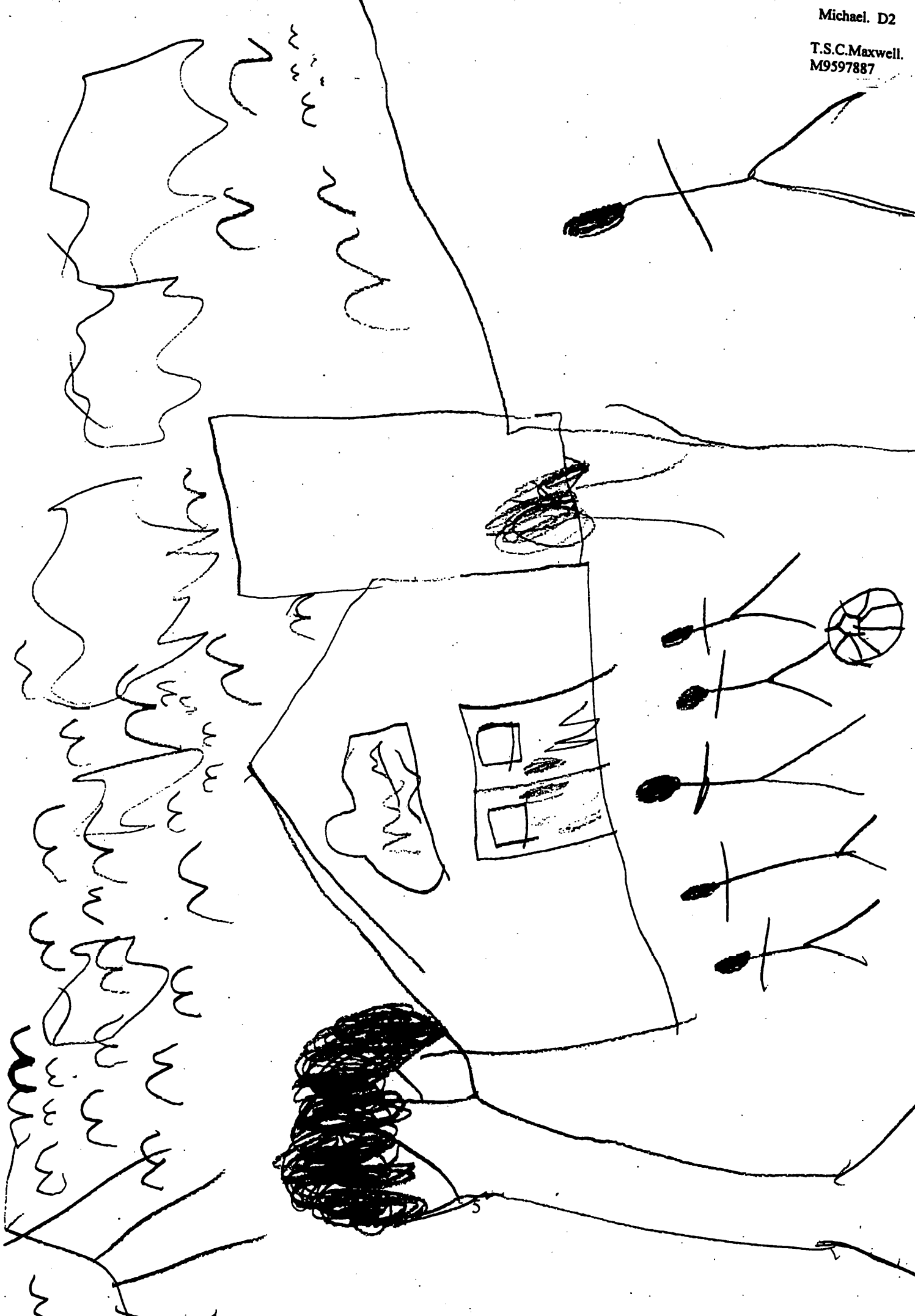
The following selected drawings are referred to in the main text. They are labelled D1, D2, D3 and D4 as in their order of completion.

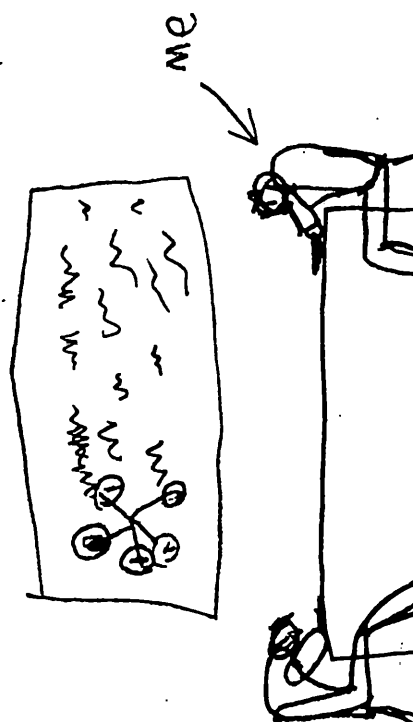
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Danielle.	D1,2,3,4.
Kyli, W.	D1,2,3,4.
Daniel.	D1,2,3,4.
Gareth.	D4.
Woody	D1.
Sarah.	D1,2,3,4.
Kimberley.	D1,2.
Ricky.	D2.
Kyli,A.	D1,2,3,4.

Michael. D1

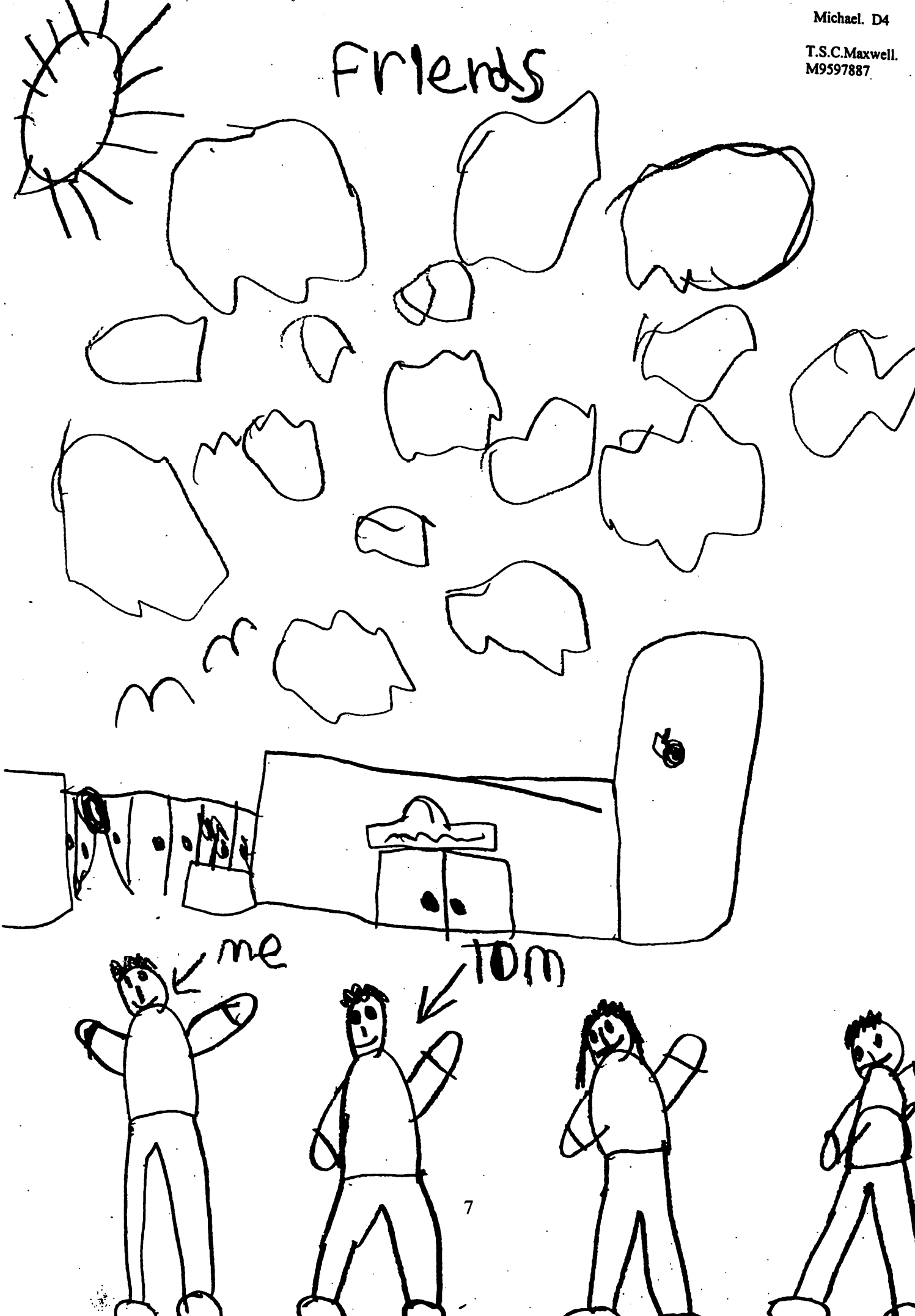
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Friends



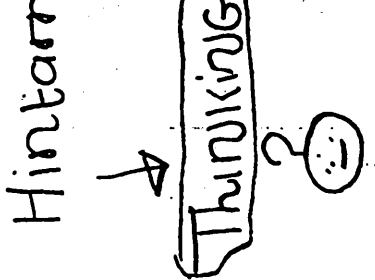
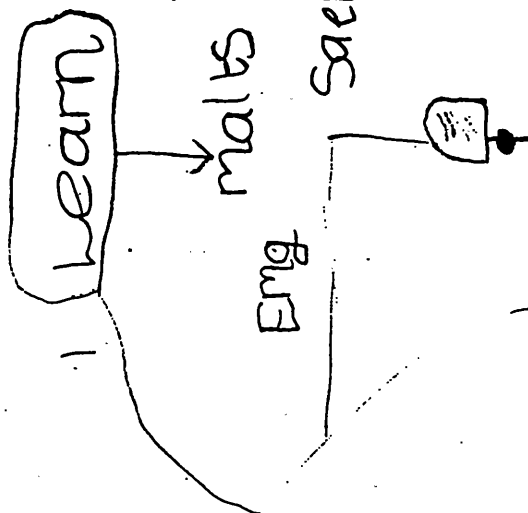
At School

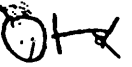
How we

fell

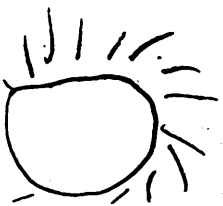
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Hannap
Junior
School

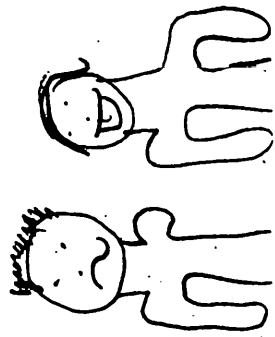




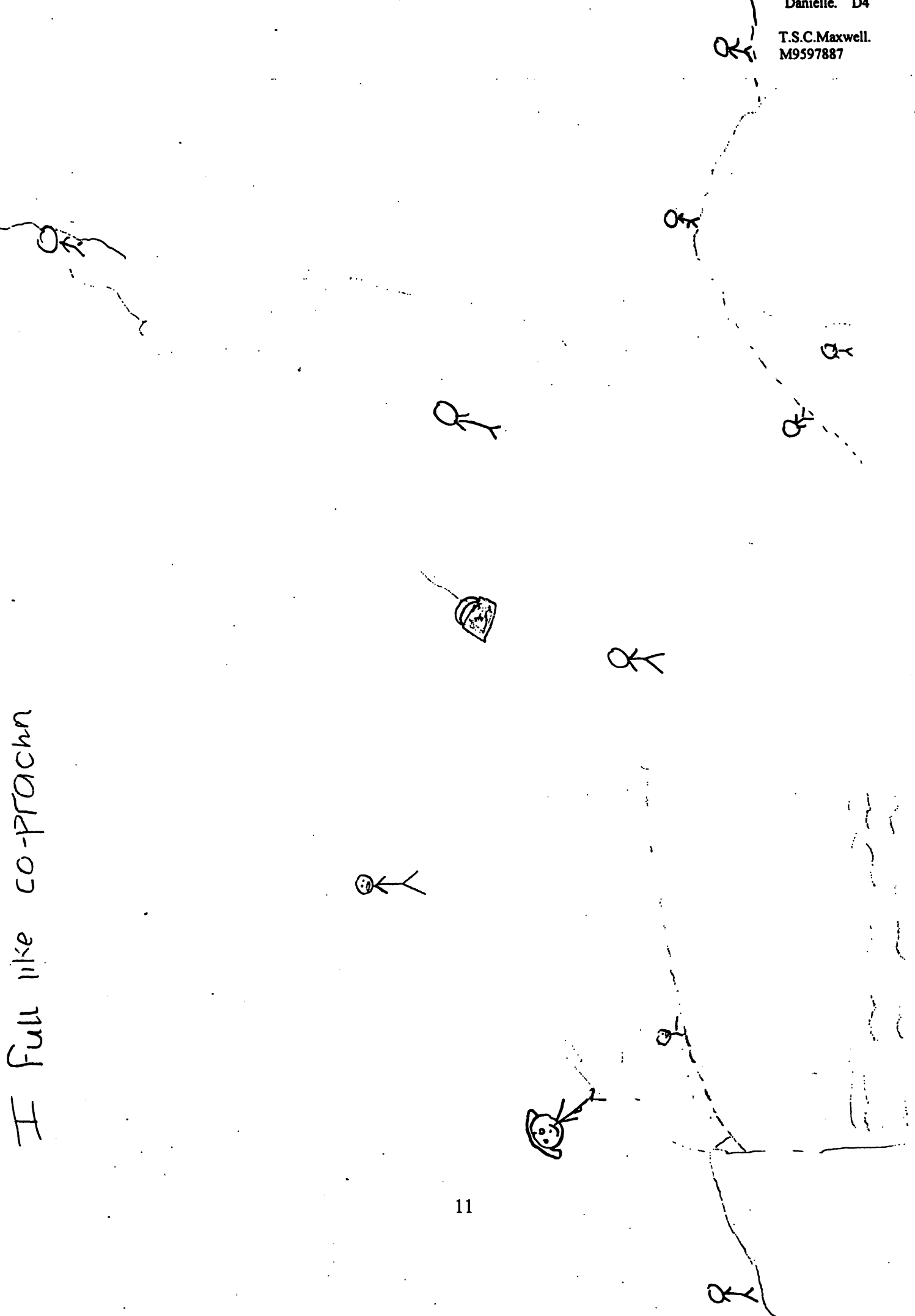
I fell happy



I fell Judea rite

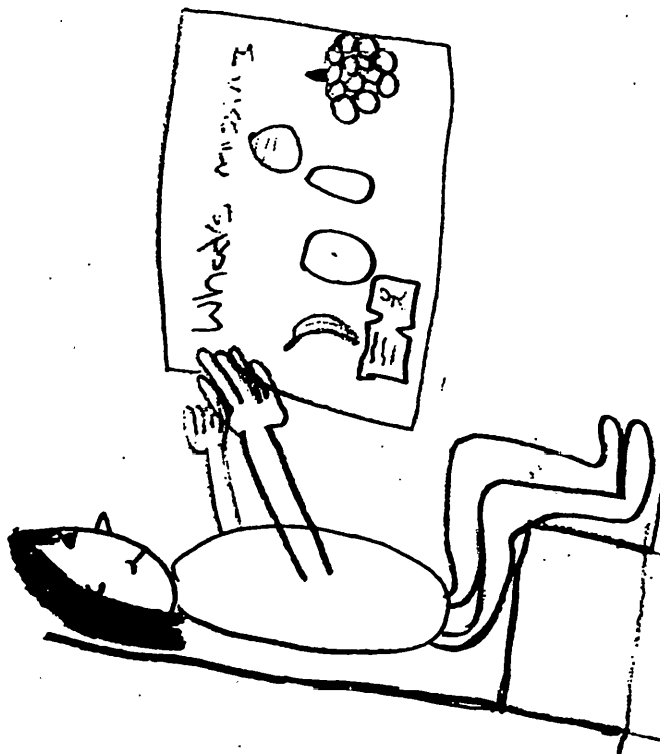


I Full like co-prachn



the special needs but

I feel happy



Standing on the chair
by putting hands up

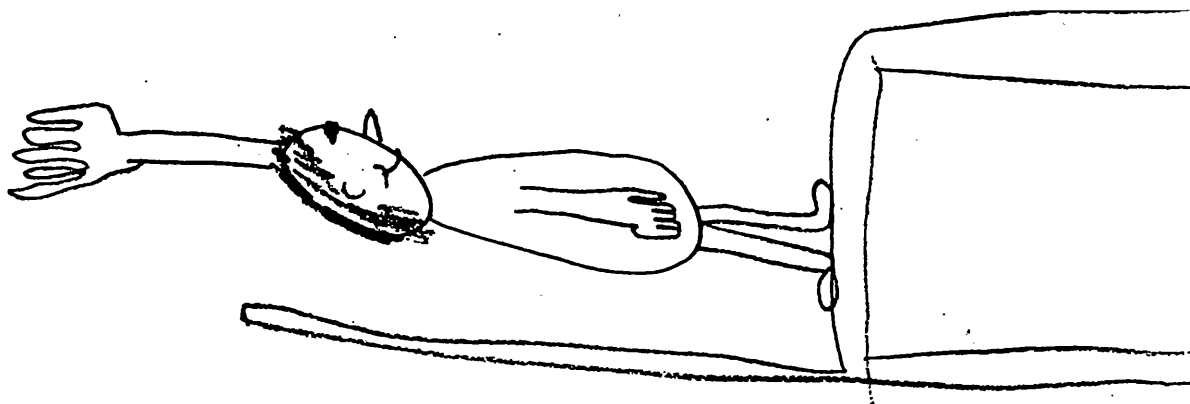
Mrs Know all

Nasty

angry

Unhappy

Spitful



happy

pleased

Exlent

Jenres

excited

greatful

thankful

food

Drink

enjoyable pr

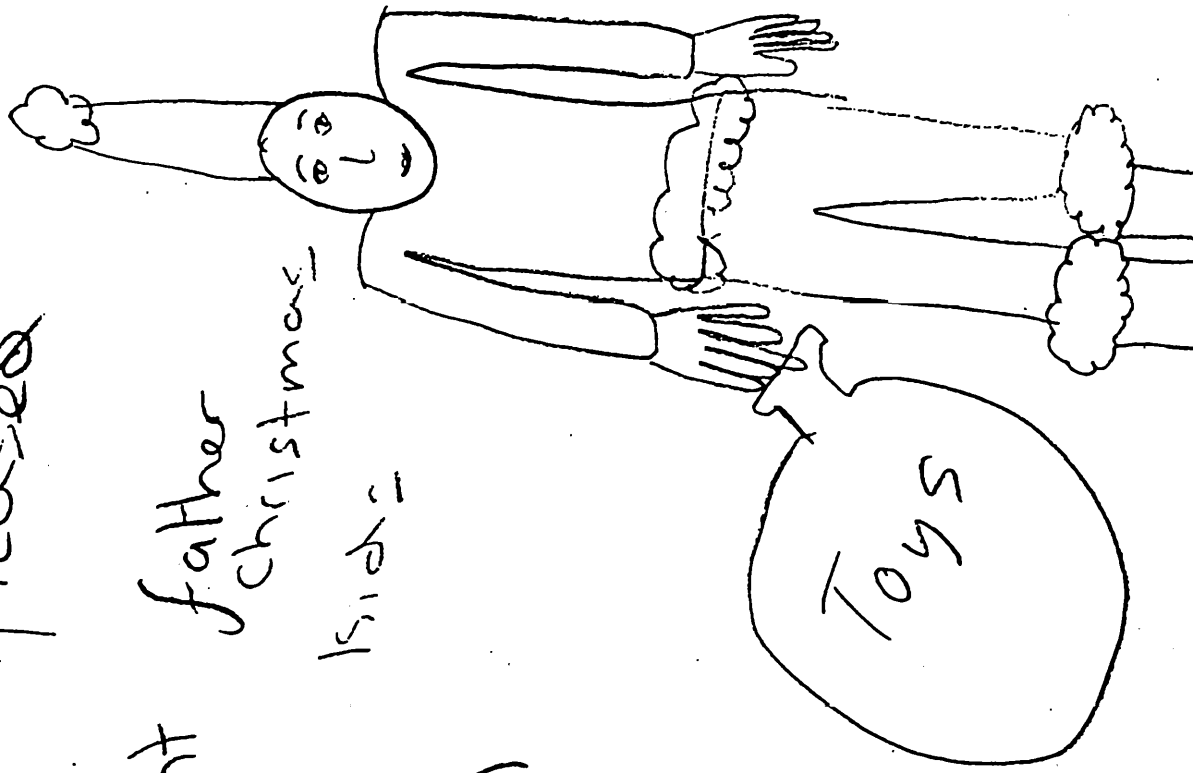
money
£15

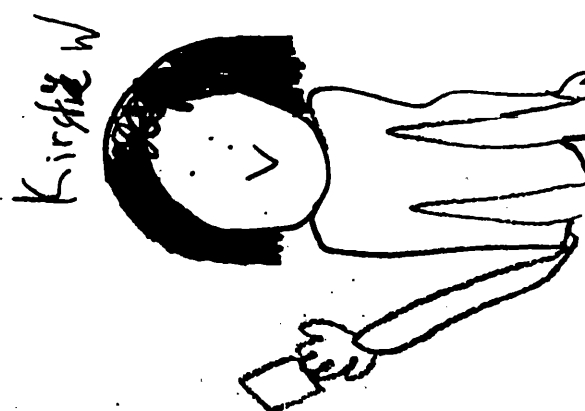
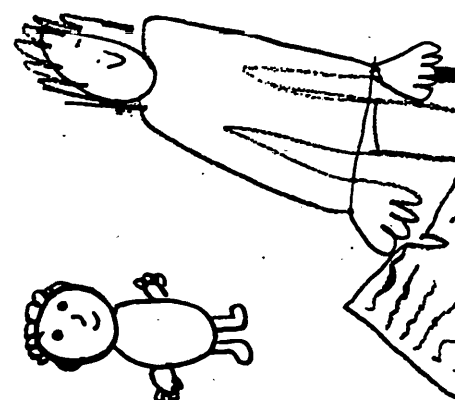
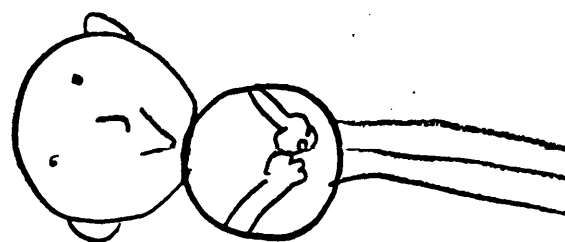
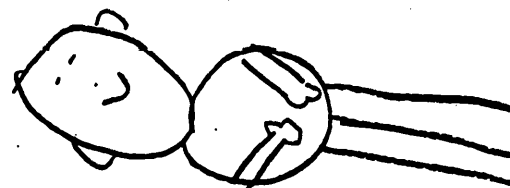
Toys

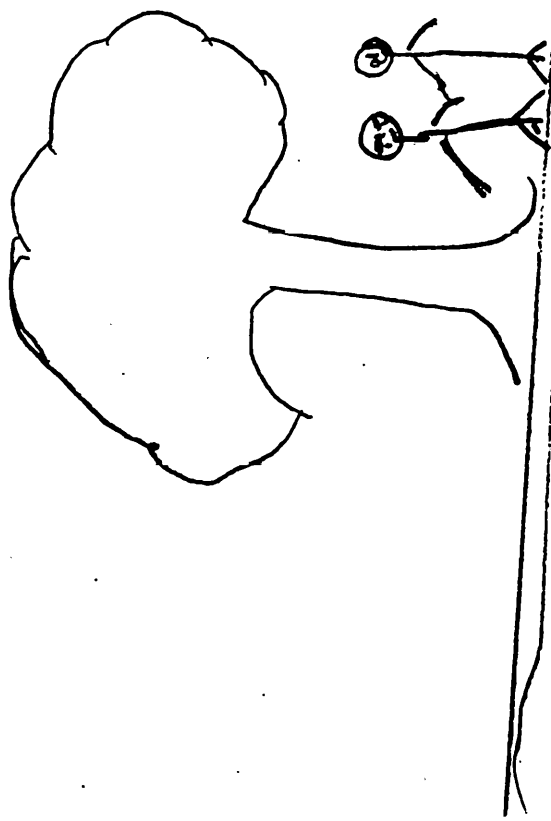
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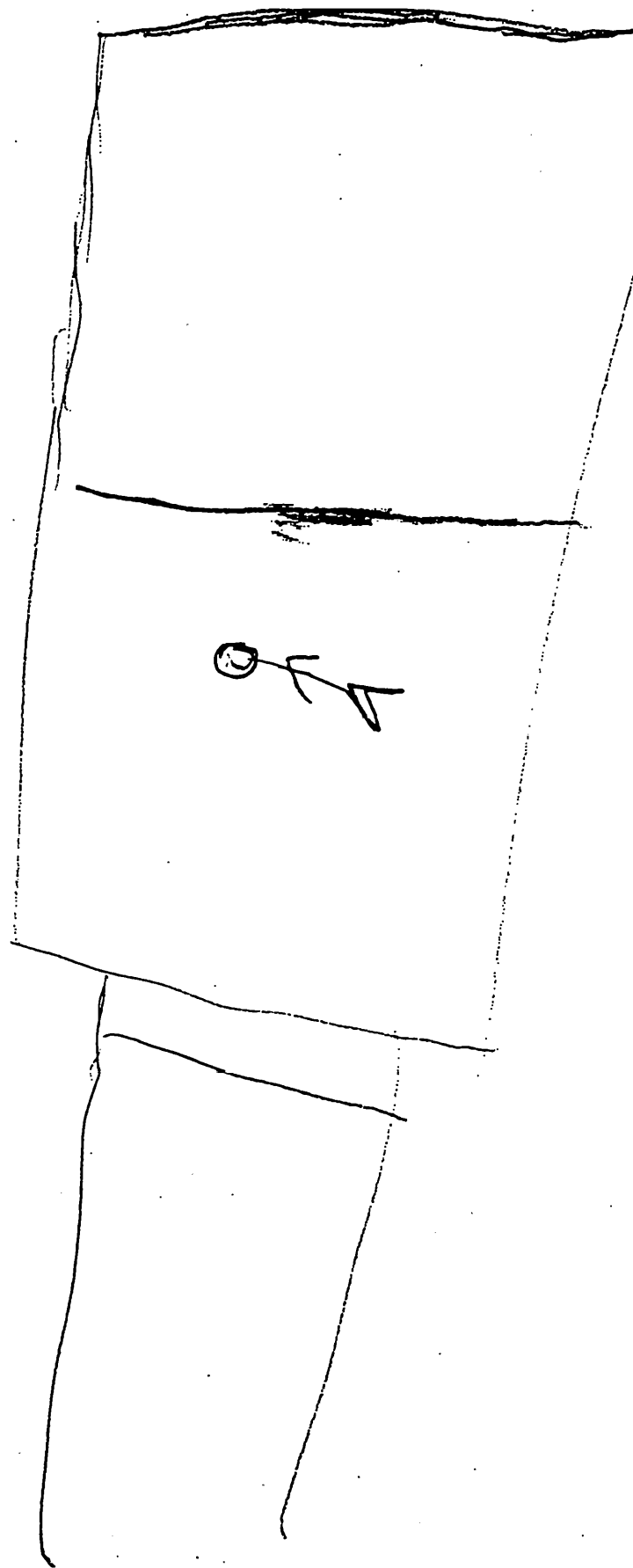
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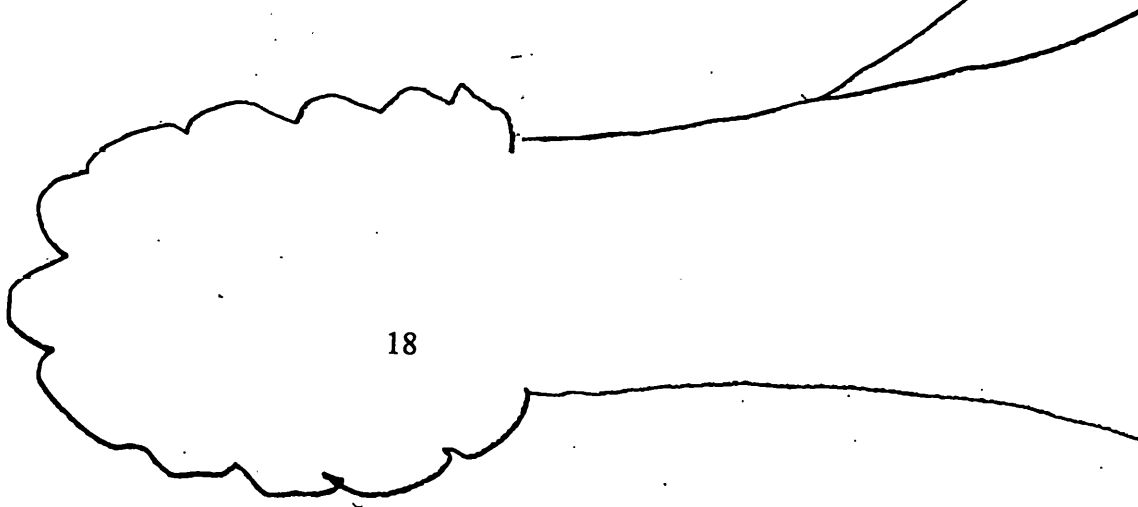
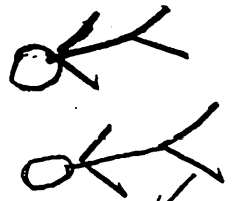
happy to be with
nice

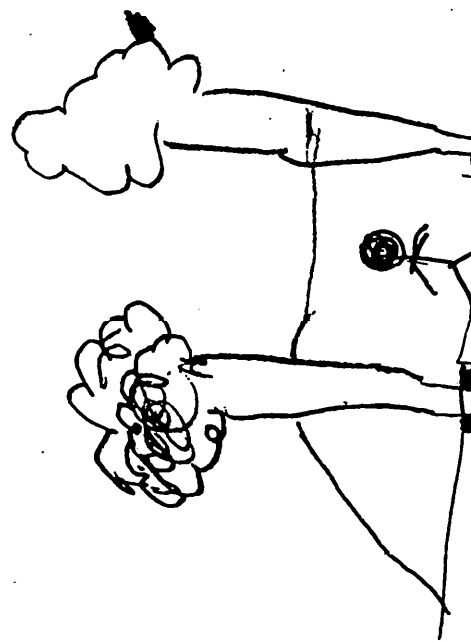








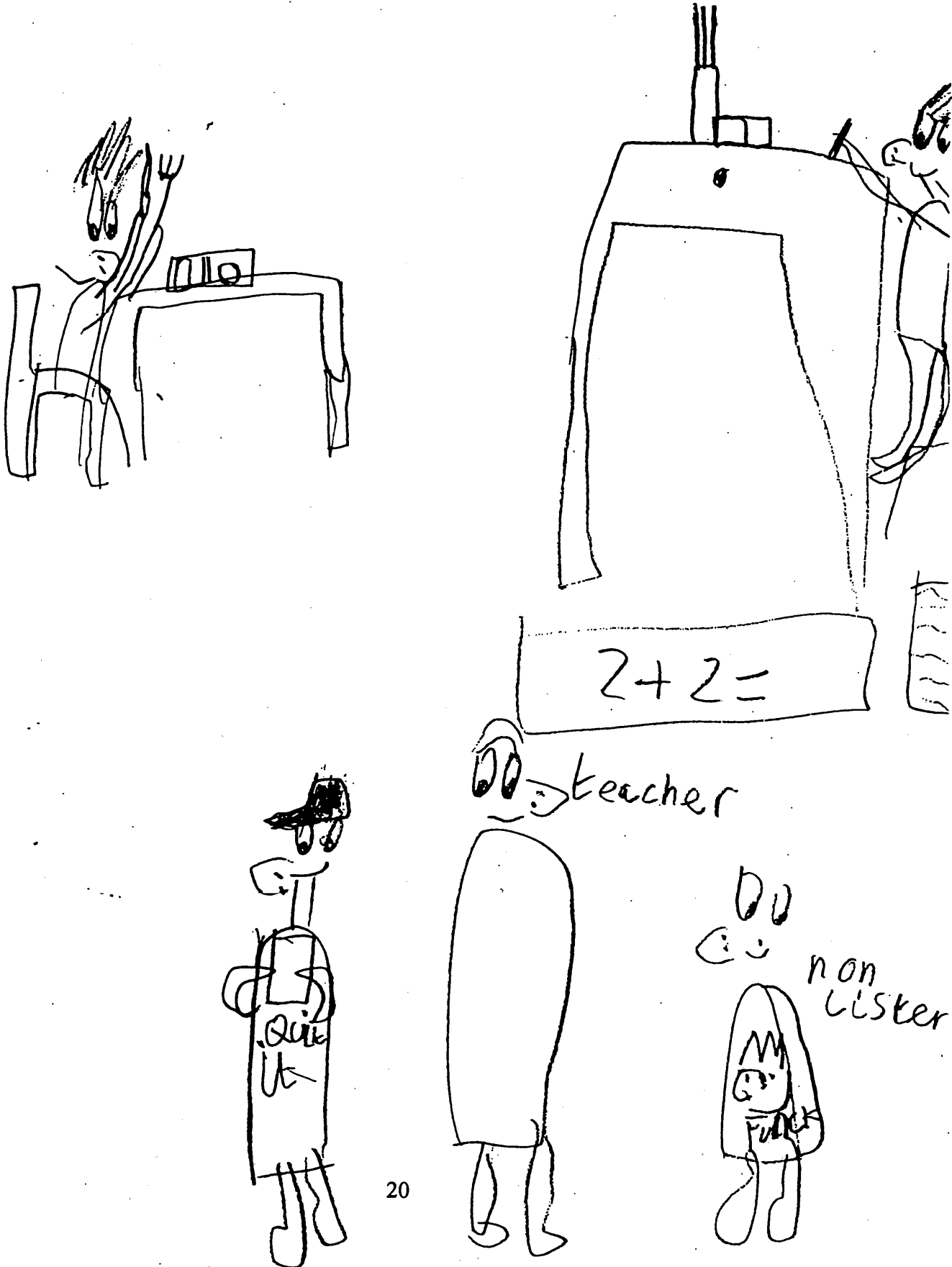


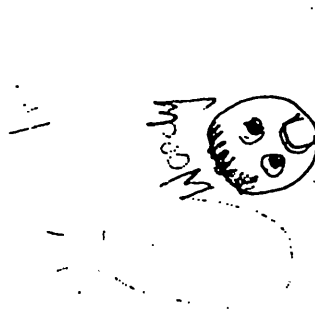


manners

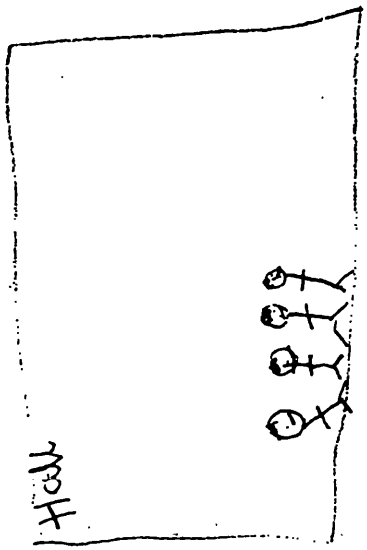
Gareth. D4

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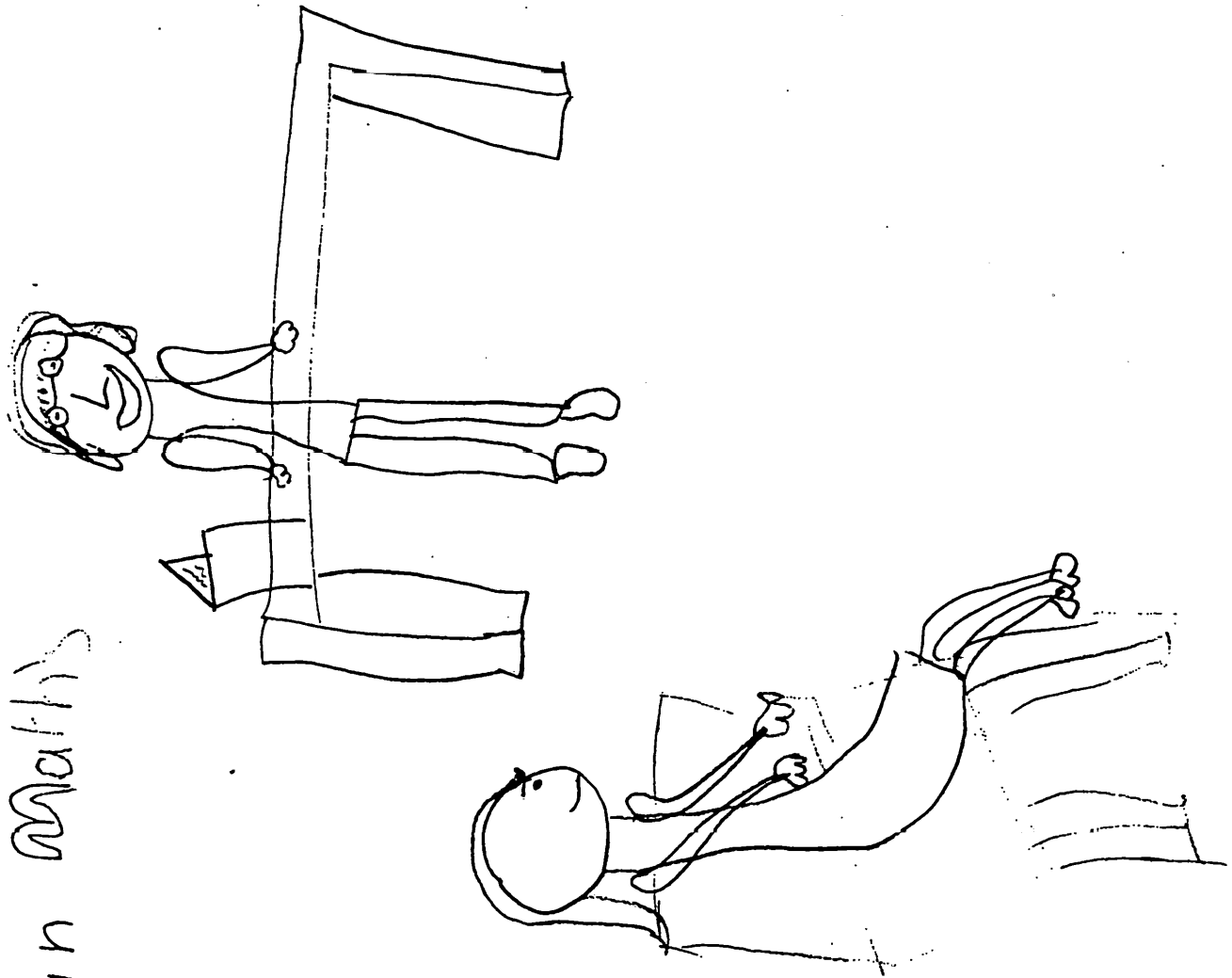


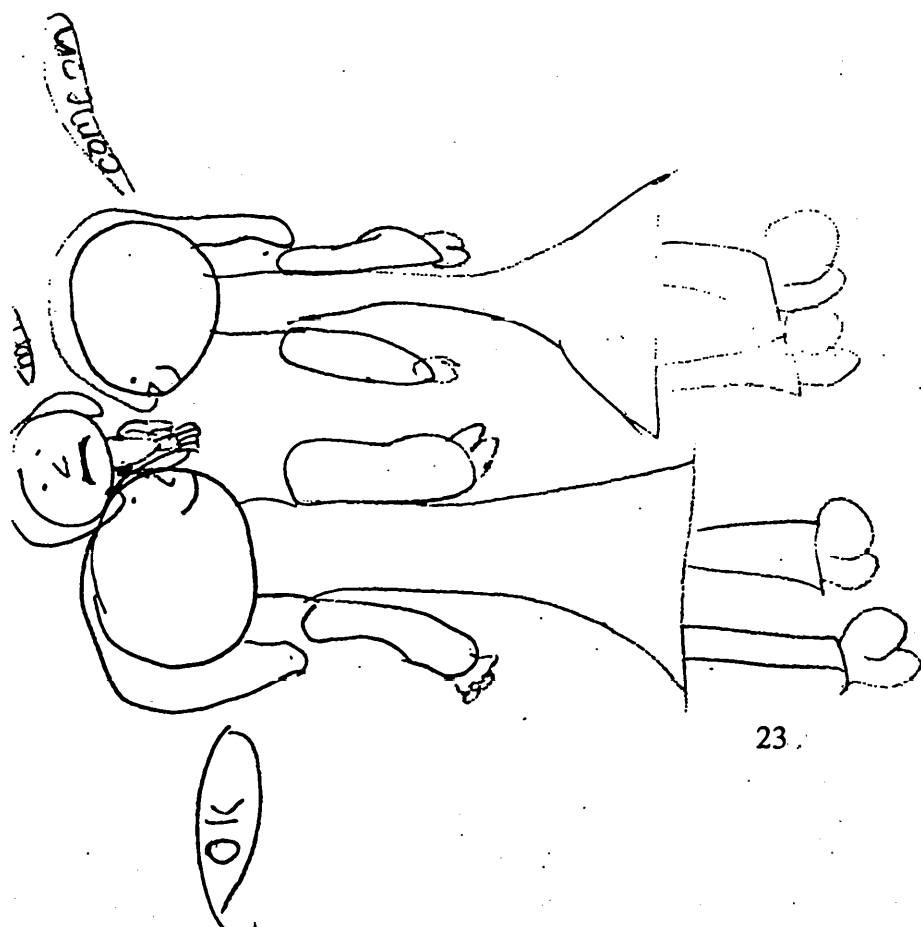
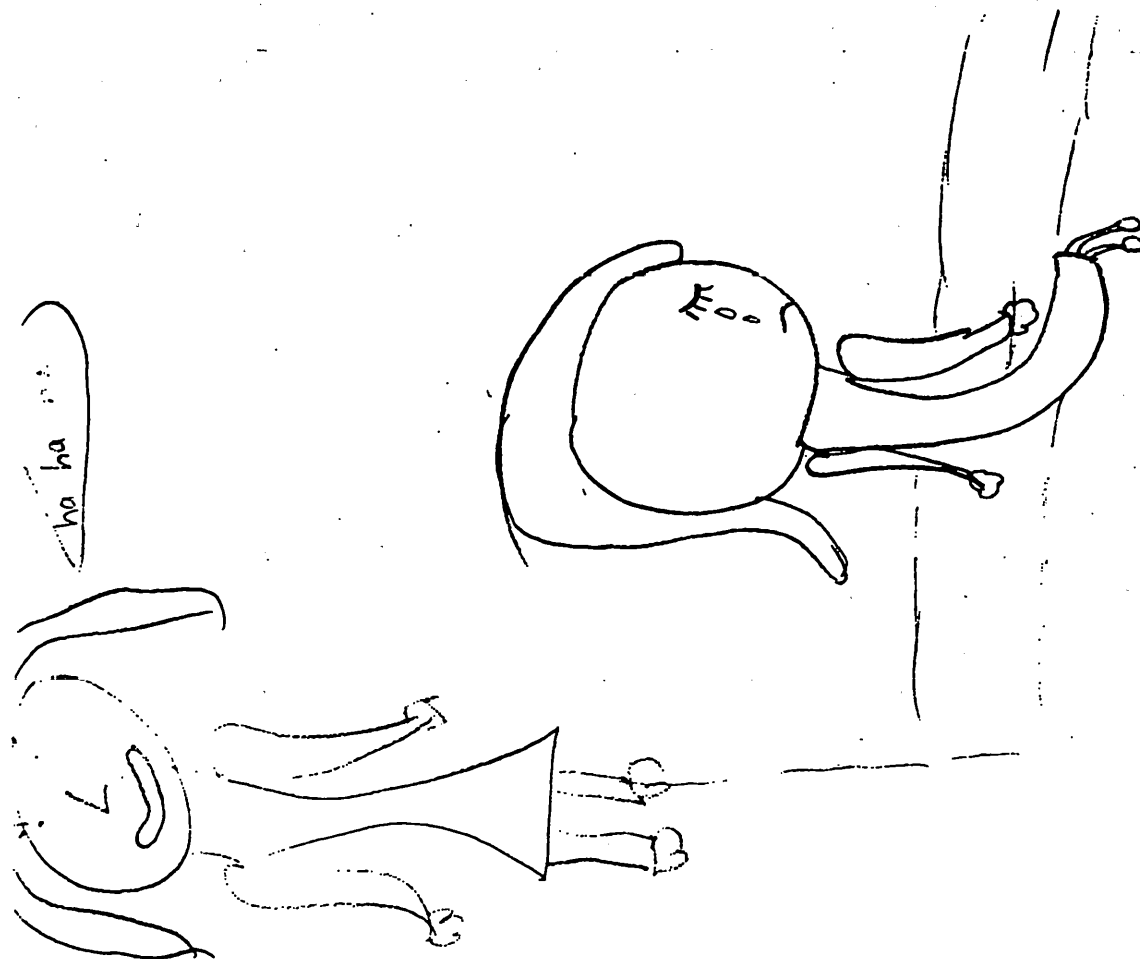


Safe 20
Woody 20
RIC 120
 $1 \times 2 = 2$
 $3 \times 3 = 9$
 $6 \times 2 = 12$
1005, 100



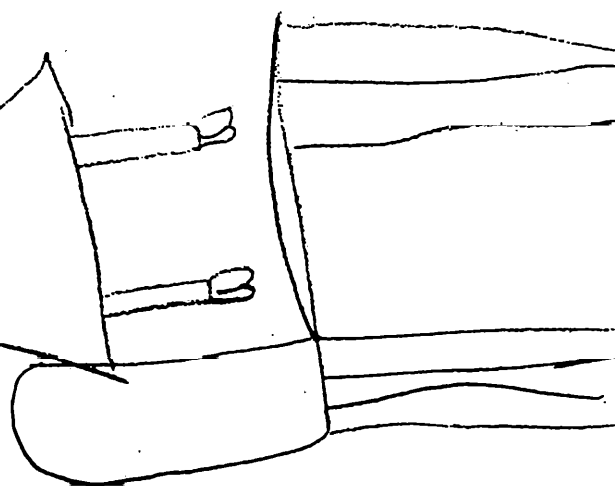
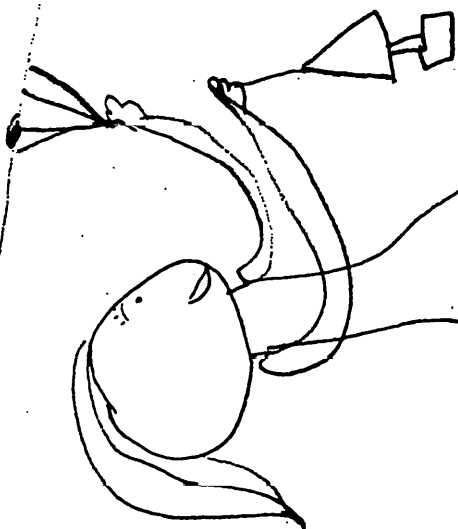
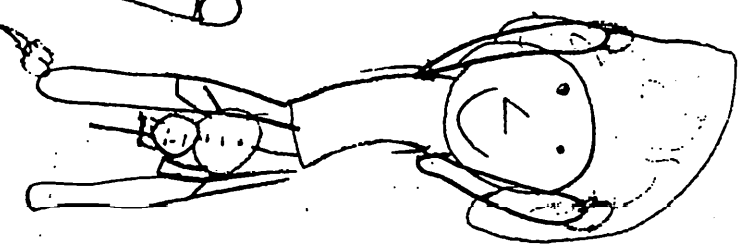
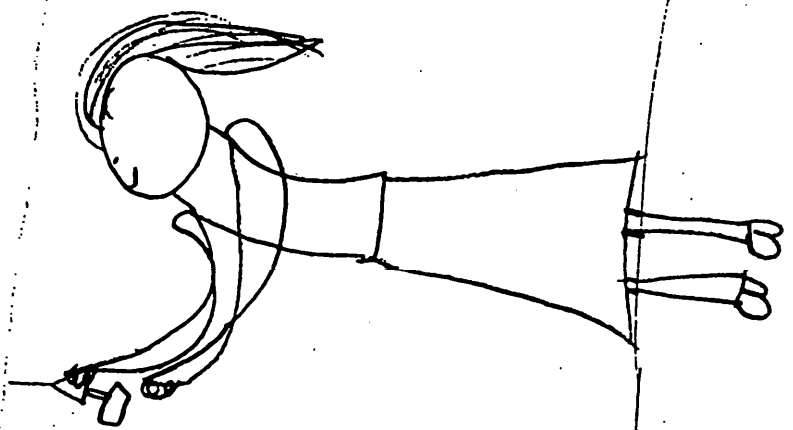
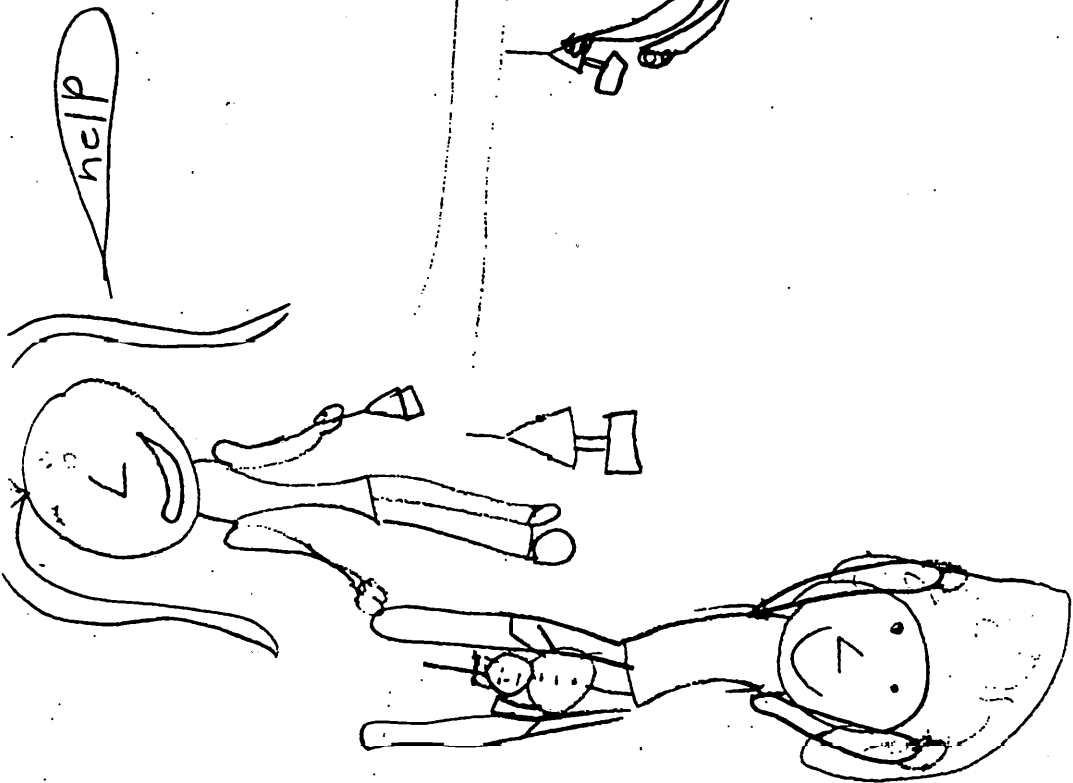
Happy in math's



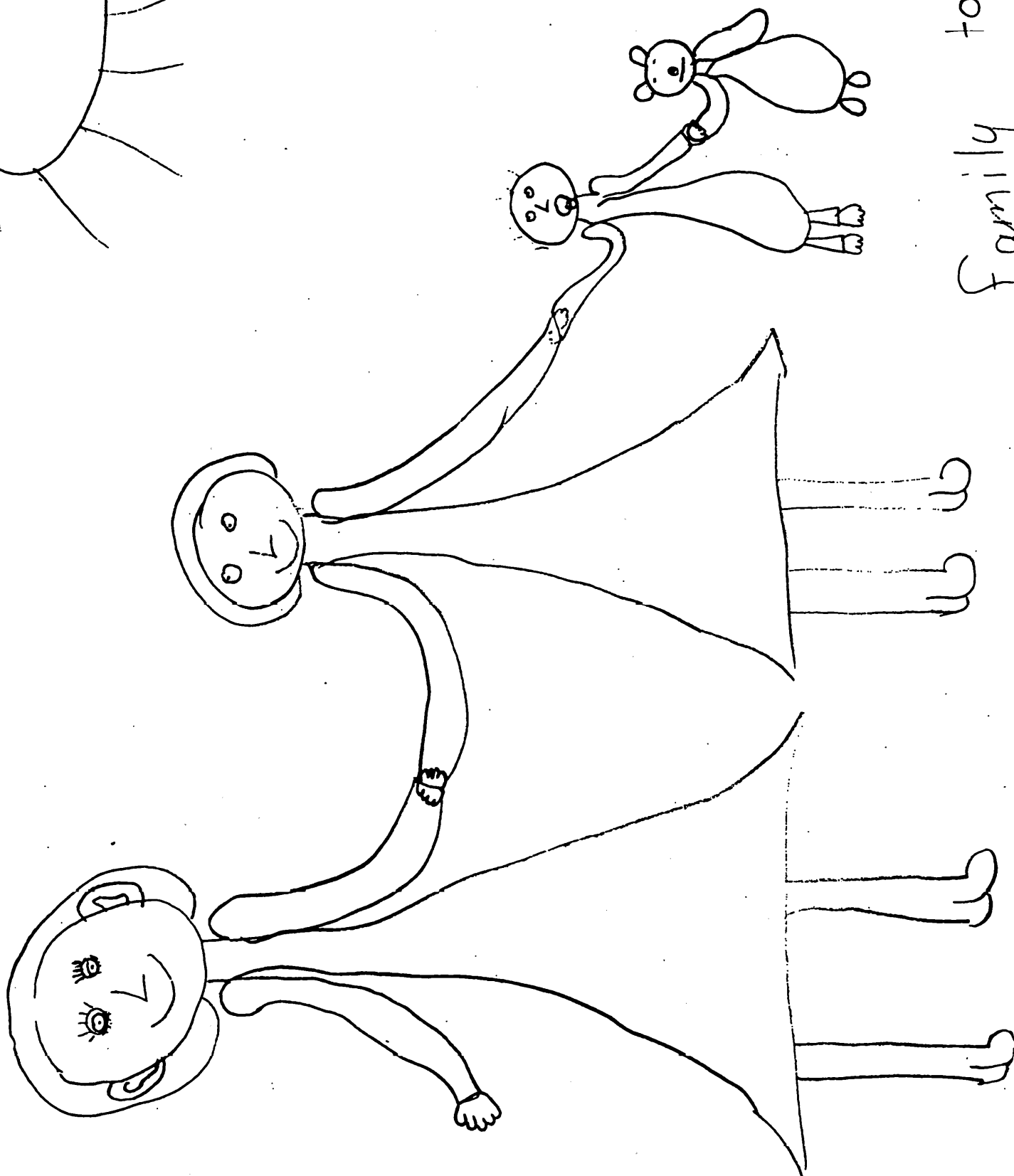
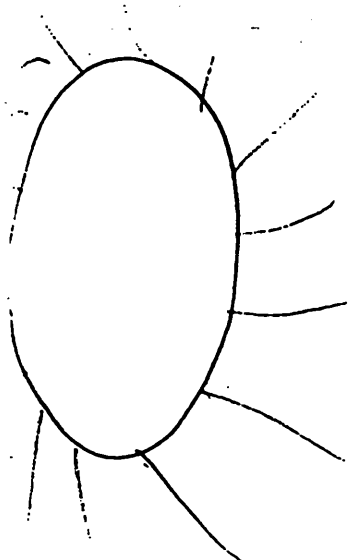


Sad things

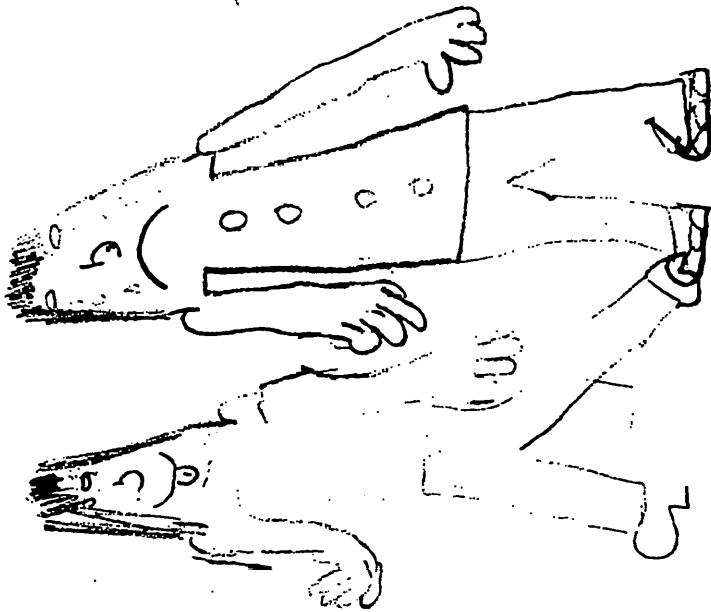
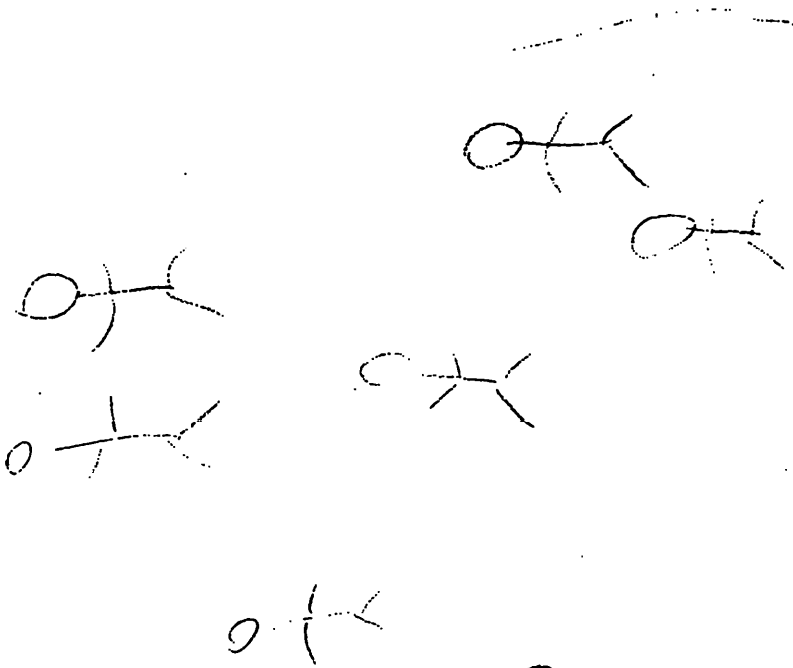
Happy 11

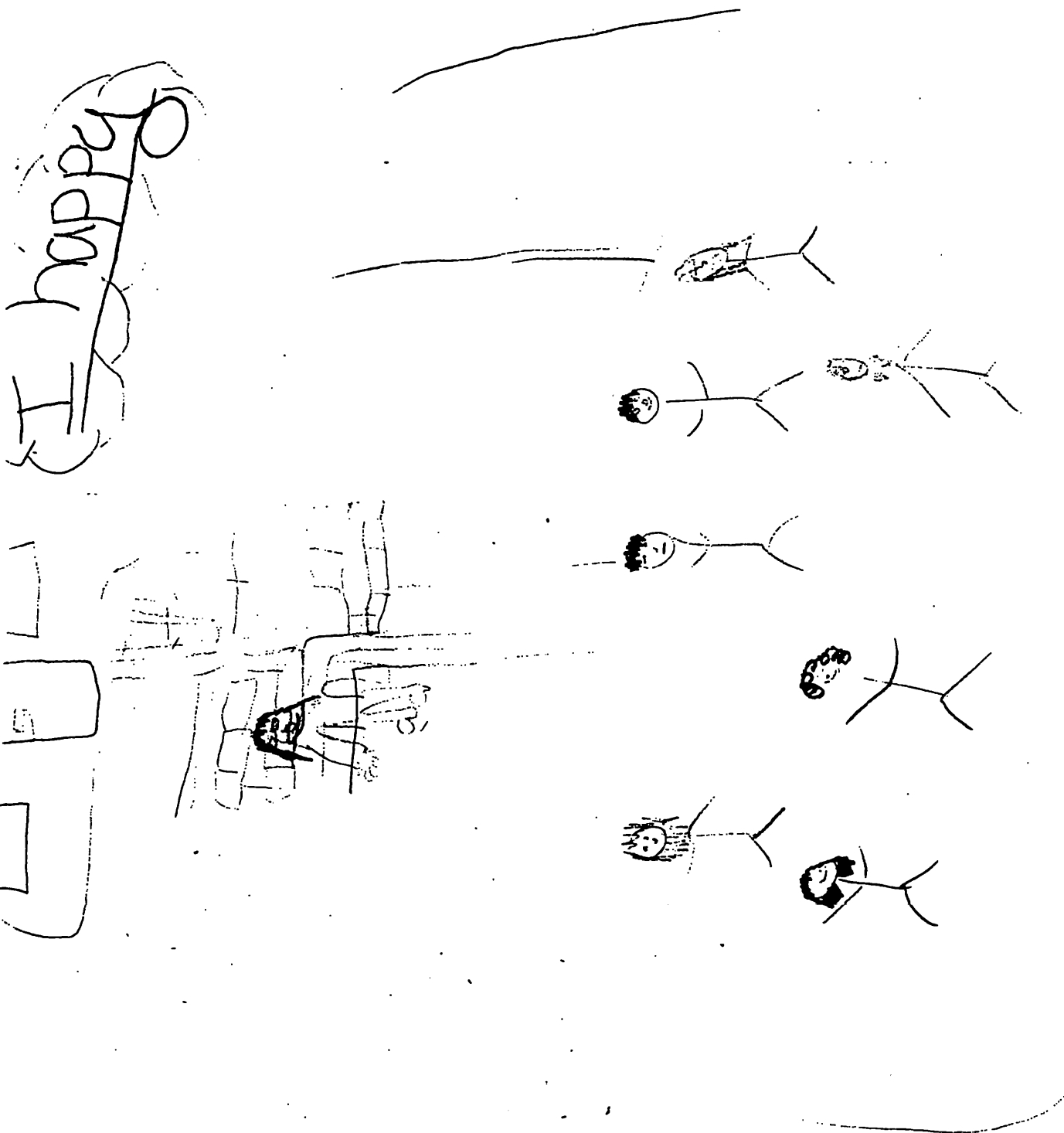


Family
together

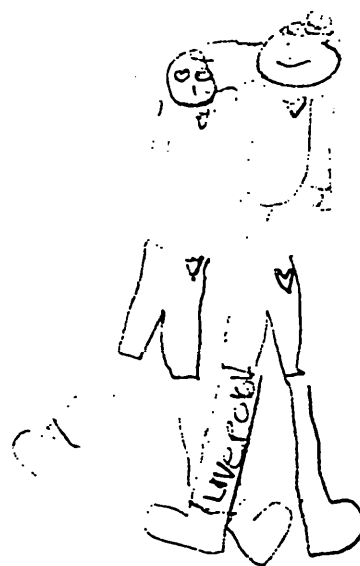
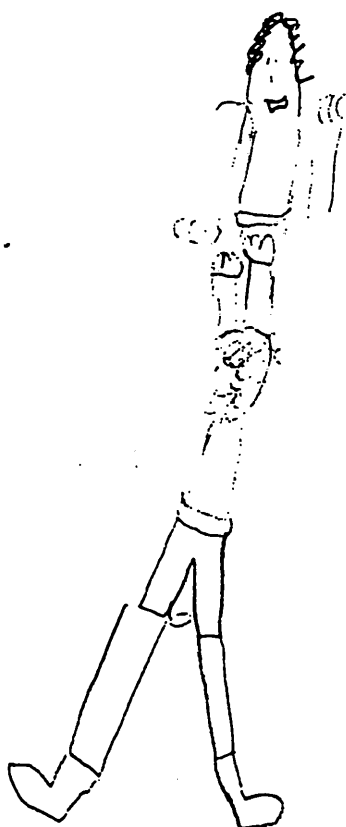


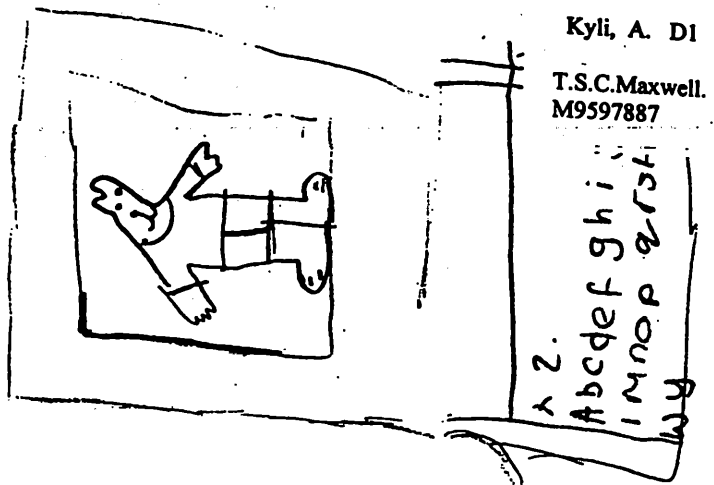
UpSet



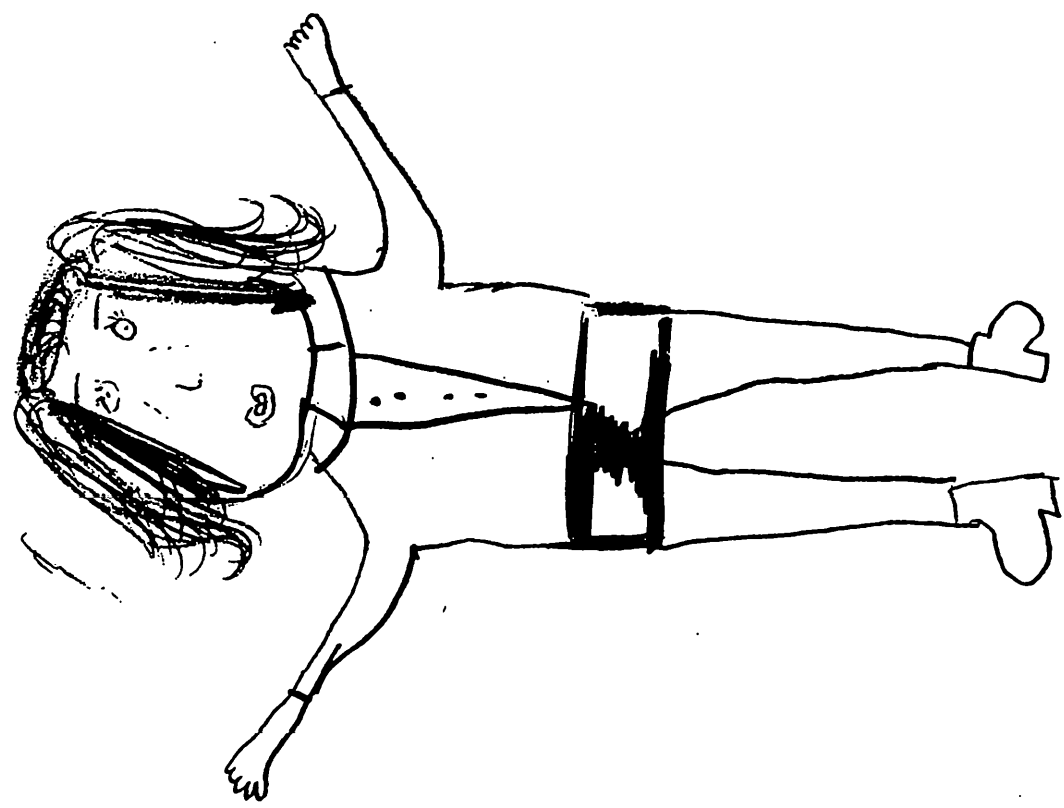


Nice and not nice



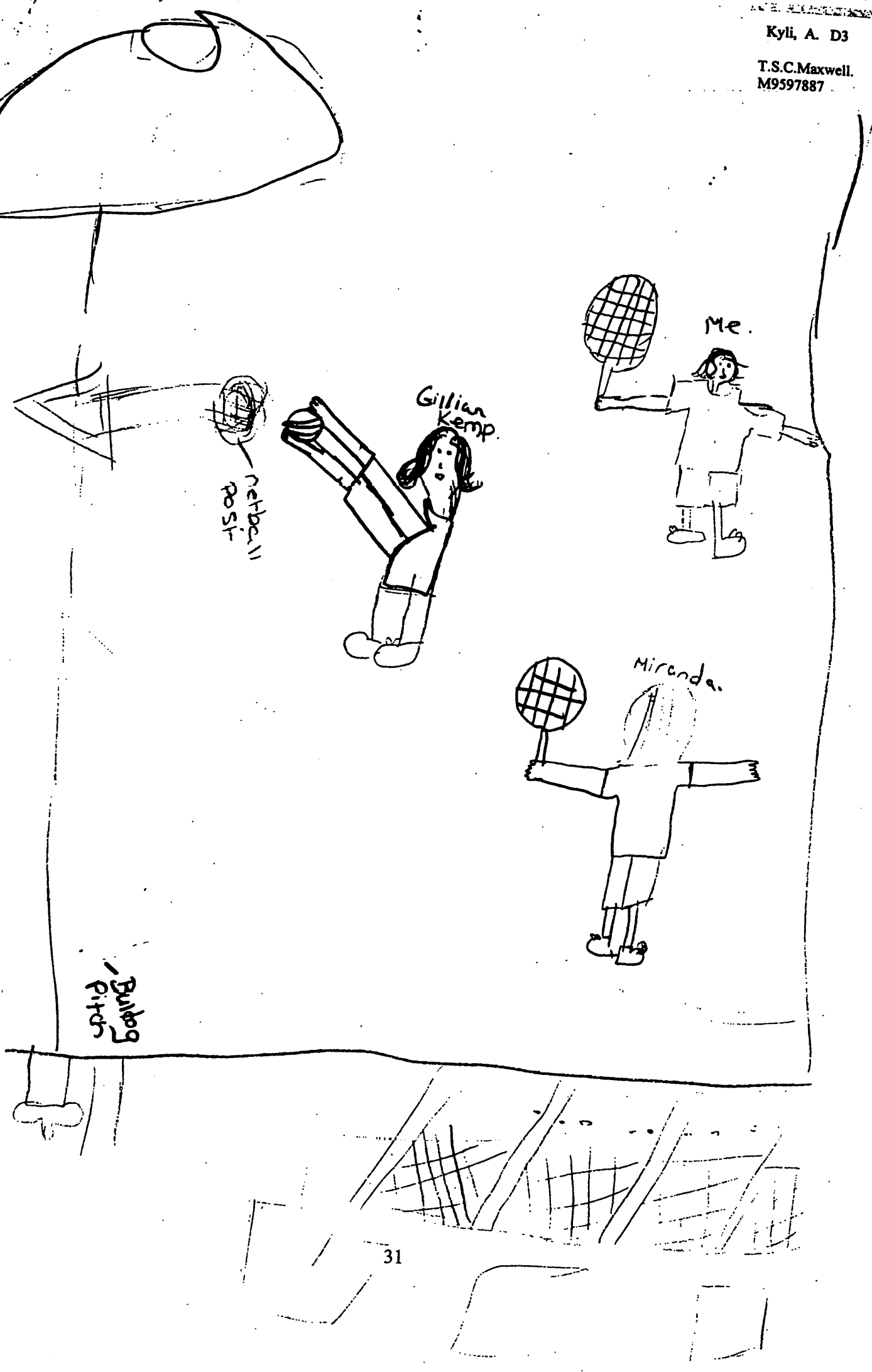


Quite Happy



When
people
call
me names

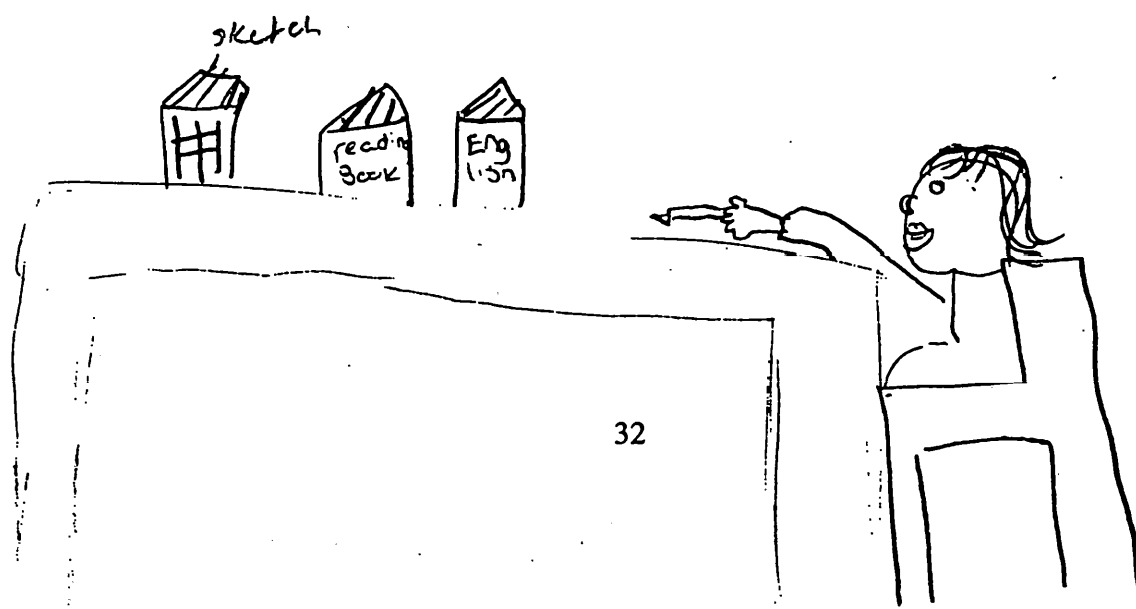
Fun Games and Activities



I like to learn.

Today we were going to learn
about space

Miss Zander



APPENDIX 2.

THE PUPILS' CONVERSATIONS.

2a) Five selected cases in an abridged form. Supporting A/SenCo notes.

2b) All cases in note form showing themes and constructs.

2c) The transcription of the conversation with Kyli, A.

2a)

GARETH.

Introduction.

Gareth was described by school staff as being lively and a 'good talker' who had concentration and attention difficulties in formal lessons. He was considered a bright and able pupil who had lots of potential, but had low academic self esteem. He could be familiar and cheeky with teachers, whilst at the same time being bright, sharp and an active learner or enquirer. He was very outgoing, verbally challenging in his peer groups as well as to staff. He accepted responsibility for his own behaviour, but tended to solve his problems through either verbal or physical confrontation.

Drawings produced and their titles.

D1 - 'Cross Gareth'.

D2 - 'Happy Gareth'.

D3 - Untitled.

D4 - 'Good listening, good knowledge, good manners'.

Emerging Themes.

The themes that emerge from Gareth's PCP discussions were as follows,

* Cross - Happy

Cross when people do things to you.

Happy people are those who like life, like where they are living, like their school and are a 'happy person'. They can also be people who 'get their revenge back', which makes you feel good by 'punching them back'.

* Revenge

"I like, I like, they've hurt me and I've got revenge back. It's hard to explain."

* Getting into trouble - Doesn't want to get into trouble.

'Getting into trouble' was described as people who are bad in school, don't bother to do any work, don't have to do any work, don't do what they are told and never doing what the teacher says.

'Doesn't want to get into trouble' is described as people who don't want revenge, can be good / excellent all the time, whose work is 'always perfect'. Gareth described how his whole table is full of 'them' and that these types of people just tend to 'get on with it' and are not people who say "no ... it's boring, I don't want to do it." These are people who 'just get on with it'.

* Doing work - Not doing work.

Doing work is someone who is in D3, being at a desk, being happy and writing. This is a picture where the person is "enjoying, doing what I'm told to do." The sort of person who is doing work is someone who 'knows something' and is someone who knows that they are getting it right. This makes me happy and allows me to get the credit for 'what I know' (rather than someone else getting the credit), getting the credit makes you happy and so does 'knowing more stuff than my teacher.'

* Wanting to get it right - Mr know it all.

Wanting to get it right means a need to impress people who will say 'look there goes Gareth' (eg, a knowing type person).

Mr Know it all type people might get jealous, eventually getting bored of saying there is a 'Mr Know it all'.

* Knowing 'stuff' - Isn't good at knowledge.

Knowing stuff implied getting on / going to college / learning / getting a good job and earning lots of money. A person who was good at knowledge

could be very kind.

Isn't good at knowledge are the types of people who 'haven't listened (but would be good at something).' This was because, "even someone who is naughty, can be good at being naughty ", everyone is good at something, either being practical or academic. Gareth stated that "even if it's a silly thing they're still good at it."

* Listened - Hadn't listened. (Listener - Non Listener).

'Listened' type people would know every single book and 'know every single one what I've learnt to do. A 'listener' is someone who knows what to do, has good manners when eating and doing their work. Listening "it helps you to learn." People who listen or are listeners are people who listen to where to sit, to getting on with their work, to get his information right and to 'get in' his retaliation.

'Hadn't listened' people wouldn't be able to do their work and would spoil it for others who had listened. They would be non-listeners. A non listener was someone 'that's looking elsewhere when the teachers are telling em something.'

Gareth introduced the idea of people being hygienic and related this to being someone who had good manners, listened to people and 'doesn't look through other people's windows'.

The session ended with Gareth producing a final picture (D4) with four scenes in it which included some of the things we have talked about. That is, being good at listening, good at knowledge, having good manners etc. Good manners (eating).

Listening (someone doing work at a table).

Happy at work. Knowing what to do.

Non listener in class, looking away from the teacher.

I felt that this drawing had allowed Gareth to pull a number of his thoughts about school together in one picture.

A/SenCo Discussion.

Gareth was considered to be an able and inquisitive pupil who appeared interested in learning in general. He was described as having lots of academic potential, but had low academic self esteem and tended to think he was no good at anything.

He could be very outgoing and verbally challenging in group or class situations. He liked to take control in board game situations (during alternative play) and often challenged or confronted his peers. He was capable of sparking off negative interactions with his peers both in a verbal and physical way. When they reacted, Gareth thinks he was able to legitimise his own aggressive behaviour towards them by hitting them back.

He has recently been happier to talk more openly about problems or difficulties in his home and school life. He has few real friends and school staff have worked hard to develop a sense of peer acceptance. Gareth accepts ownership of his behaviour and responds well to being 'listened to' by school staff. There was a feeling that Gareth cannot be trusted alone without adult supervision with his peer group both in the class room and in the playground.

WOODY.

Introduction.

Woody was described by school staff as a rather sad boy who had poor peer relationships, was difficult to motivate and often storms out of or away from situations (in class and in the playground). He saw himself as a poor or negative learner despite being considered by staff (and the LEA Support Services) as a boy of average cognitive ability. Woody had been to at least three primary schools where there was a history of unpredictable and agitated behaviour with temper tantrums such as throwing himself on the floor in frustration and running away from class and on occasions from school.

Drawings produced and their titles.

Woody presented himself as a very self conscious drawer. He thought he was 'rubbish', that his drawings were 'rubbish' and concluded the drawing session as "It's all rubbish." He tried very hard but was reluctant to commit himself to paper and rubbed out his efforts a number of times. He did eventually however complete the following pictures.

D1 - 'At school and wicked'.

D2 - 'Not wicked anymore'.

D3 - 'A man shouting help'.

D4 - Untitled.

Emerging Themes.

* Seeking security in the special needs 'hut', not just because the work was easier, but also as a place of safety. He stated that if work was hard he could go to the special needs hut, and 'if it isn't then I just go over in my class'.

* Being kept in - Being allowed out to play.

Being kept in to do work that has not been done in the lessons.

Being happy when allowed out to play, playing tag, being with mates when teachers are not around.

* Being believed as a person - A non believed person.

It is important to be believed as a person because people will be your friend.

You can be both happy and sad when you are believed, happy because you are being believed and sad because you are telling the sad things that are said or done to you. When you tell people (about things in school) then they are likely to believe you and to be your friend.

Non believed people are nasty people and people who hurt you.

* Pupils who have been good - Non listeners.

Teachers know pupils have been good because they have been listening, doing what they are told and 'listening means doing as they are told.' If

you don't listen then you won't know anything when you are older.

Non listeners are not nice people, don't look at you, don't look at teacher, would be talking and talking to their mates.

* Telling people when you are worried - Not nice people (who don't tell people about their problems).

Telling people helps you to be happy, to be good in school 'cos' then you get to learn. Important to tell adults (dinner lady, teacher etc) when you are being picked on and to tell the truth so that they believe you.

Not nice people don't tell about their problems, don't get to learn, they are 'like weird and not good', don't know anything and get kicked out of school.

* Happy - Unhappy.

Happy pupils like their teacher and assemblies, whilst unhappy pupils don't like assemblies and think they are hard boys 'who punch me'.

* Happy - Bored.

Happy people find assemblies interesting, whilst 'bored' people don't want to go to assembly because it's too long.

* Changing things in school for the better.

Woody thought that school would be better if there was no more work, no more school and no more reading. Getting out for the day with his mates would also be a good thing.

Concluding thoughts.

The following themes and constructs appeared to be important for Woody.
Teachers.

Teacher control.

The SEN 'hut'.

Learning, listening and knowing things.

Conforming and being recognised as conforming (being good).

Freedom with friends, outside and not working.

Socialising with adults and peers.

Woody's pictures assist the interview but rarely relate directly to his deep thinking. He was an uneasy, unsettled young boy whose fourth picture is of a dark, aggressive, spikey sun which is barely visible. A minimal contribution which reflects his caution, reluctance and rather private approach to sharing his views and thoughts throughout the sessions. His drawing of 'a man shouting help' (D3), might represent his sense of being in a system where he felt misunderstood and trapped.

A/SenCo Discussion.

Woody was described as a pupil who had been in and out of local authority care and had shown extreme behaviour in the form of setting fire to his bedroom and also in school in the form of tantrums. He was a person who was unsure of who his natural father was and in a sense was searching for a sense of self and to establish his own identity.

He appreciated one to one learning situations and responded well to a firm and calm approach to managing his learning and behaviour. He placed a high level of respect and credence on his relationship with his teacher. Learning was important to him where he knew he must listen and learn things.

He could storm out of situations, but would not actually go off the school site. He was an 'angry boy' who could be verbally aggressive to other pupils and this tended to isolate him within his peer group. He was not a cooperative type person within group situations. He appreciated 'time out' in one to one situations especially when this was in the head teacher's office. This could be to the extent that he would take the blame for things he hadn't done in order to go to the head's office.

Woody didn't get asked to be friends with any peers and he reciprocated

this by blocking any interest in his peer group. He seemed to be a lonely pupil who does however seek out trusting adults.

He wants to be noticed, valued and included at his own level, but continued to show an 'animal like caution.' He was described as being "Like a stray dog being offered food ." That is, he snatched at opportunities in order to satisfy his basic need. The A/SenCo felt that Woody was a victim of circumstance in terms of his home background where he seemed to be in the middle of everything. He showed a lack of trust in both adult and peer relationships based on his past experiences and had no strong friendships with children in school. He could be very self protective and defensive and kept people at arms length.

SARAH.

Introduction.

The discussion and collection of views thoughts and ideas in the form of Sarah's drawings and PCP conversation I felt was one of the most productive and positive sessions in the study.

Sarah was a pupil who has a documented history of being physically and emotionally abused and was involved with a number of external support agencies. She had spent periods of time in foster care and with her grandparents whilst being away from her natural parents.

Drawings produced and their titles.

D1 - 'Happy in Maths'.

D2 - 'Sad things'.

D3 - 'Happy times'.

D4 - 'Family together'.

D5 - 'All together'.

Emerging Themes.

The themes that emerged from the work with Sarah are as follows;

*** Happy - 'Happy in Maths'(D1).**

In Maths with a teacher, where she (me the pupil) is 'listening.' The teacher thinks she is being good by listening. Good people in class are people who are readers and spend time listening and reading. You can be happy in class when you are learning, sitting down and concentrating.

Happy times can also be listening to friends and 'doing things together with my friends' eg D3 'Happy times' when putting up decorations. It is important to be with your friends in order to play, to play with them, to have a good time and to have 'playful happiness.'

*** Best friends - Bully types. (taken from D2 'Sad things').**

Best friends say nice things about you, stick up for you, help by trying to get you out of trouble (with the bullies) and generally help you treat people nicely. Friends ask you to play with them, they ask you to help them, to join them in their games. Sometimes I ask to join them and sometimes they ask me.

Bully types tend to treat people badly, say things behind your back (say rude things to you), make you feel alone and you get lonely. These people can make you feel sad with no friends especially on the playground. You can feel upset and alone and feel like hiding away, you try not to, but can end up crying (when they say 'not nice' things to you) and feel embarrassed when bullied (in front of other people). They (the bullies) try to pick on you by getting other people to pick on you and they say 'it's ok to pick on her.'

*** Being upset and alone when being bullied. (D2).**

In this drawing Sarah said that people were 'laughing at me, picking on me, looking at me and embarrassing me. It makes me want to hide away and feel like crying.' She said, "They're beating, beating, beating me up" and "I got beaten up on the way to school, (and) on the way back from

swimming." Sarah explained that if you get physically hurt in the playground then it's ok to cry, but if you get teased then it's hard and you shouldn't cry or show your feelings. I get lonely when I have no one to play with. I try to find someone to play with, but if they call me rude names then 'I get fed up with that.'

* Coping with bullying.

'You can put up with it ... all day. Telling teachers makes no difference. They tell them off and it makes no difference, they just keep doing it, they give them a demerit and they just keep on doing it'.

* Friend - Not friend.

Friends tend to include you in things they are doing, they are helpful and ask you to play with them.

People who are not your friend can be a bully and can be 'worse than a bad friend.' Sometimes you can fall out with a friend and then they beat you up and hit you quite hard. Sarah states that,

"I can hit her back, but two wrongs don't make a right."

Hitting other people is wrong, there are other ways of dealing with anger.

* You can be bullied into bullying other people, pushed into hitting other people.

"I hate that, and they're trying to harden me up and make me beat people up and it's not actually working ...to hit, to hit, to get people to hit them ... They only hit people cos they're angry and I told ... off earlier yesterday at dinner, I just said two rights don't make a wrong (*meaning to say a right*) anyway do they ... get your anger out like just hit something, not a human just a wall or stamp your feet or scream."

* Teachers are not really friends and that you don't really need friends in the classroom.

- * It would be nice to have no bullies in the school. A way of solving problems (dealing with the bullies) in school could be achieved by the following,
 - treating people with respect.
 - nobody hits nobody, then there is no one to hit.
 - expelling them (the bullies) to a special school to be taught not to hit people and staff.
 - teaching them to like each other; (these things could be taught in school by the strictest teacher).
 - teachers who could teach bullies to behave properly by saying 'that's not on, you shouldn't be crying and you shouldn't be getting beaten up.'

* Good learners - People who don't learn very well.

Good learners are sensible and not silly people. They are well behaved, good and 'they'll listen to you'. These sorts of people are 'being good' which lets (helps) you learn. People who are 'learning people' are good type people.

People who don't learn very well can also be naughty people who won't listen. They all mess around and stuff in class. It's mostly boys but some girls can be naughty too. These can be 'horrible' people who try to make you be a horrible person too by making you mix with the bullies. The bullies can kick you (under the table), whisper things at you under the desk, say naughty (swear) words at you, they use a 'C word, F word and a B word.' These types of people are also silly people.

Concluding Thoughts.

Specific themes that seem to emerge are as follows,

- Wanting to be socially included.
- Being comfortable in class as a learner and with friends in the playground.
- Being isolated, left out and bullied in the playground.
- Friends stick up for you and ask you to join in.
- Some boys spoil lessons.

- Bullying can take place in the playground and in the classroom.
- Not hitting back regardless of the provocation is a basic value for Sarah.

From our discussion I feel that,

* Listening is important to Sarah and how friends and bullies talk about you.

- Listening in maths, (D1) in a learning situation.
- Listening to others, (D2)

listening to bullies talking about you.

listening to friends sticking up for you.

listening to friends working together (D3).

- Listening is important because

"Listening and learning is the most important things." Because if you learn you get a decent job.

- Listening can be,

to people in conversation (D2 nice and not nice) (D3 nice).

to people telling you what to do (D1, listening to teachers so you can learn).

to people bossing you around, ie bullying and saying naughty words.

to people saying nice things about you (D3).

* The theme of people saying things about you

- Bullies saying things. Bullies say not nice things and are horrible to people. They can make you sad, angry and fed up. They make you like you want to get your own back and go over and punch them in the face, (but as stated above, two wrongs don't make a right).

- Friends talking to you and about you help to make you feel happy. It's good to listen to people saying nice things about you (D3). You can feel really proud of yourself hearing friends talking and saying nice things about you. They talk about me being helpful and helping other people to do things. Sarah concludes that friends are friendly and help you to feel happy about yourself.

Sarah's final contribution to the sessions is via two pictures. The first (D4) is a drawing of her family all holding hands together with easily identifiable adult and child figures and titled 'family together.' The second (D5) is a symbolic picture of people who are all joined up in a circle holding hands together and 'enjoying the company' and titled 'all together.' Both pictures seem to give the message that doing things together is important, both as a family and as a group in school.

A/SenCo Discussion.

Sarah was described as a very articulate girl who could think through her problems and on occasions was determined to be heard within class. She was in the top sets and got on well with her female teacher, yet had been challenging in an adult type way to a male trainee teacher. She can be verbally challenging in a range of situations in that she argues with school staff and can be very demanding for attention in class.

She has good peer relationships and seeks out friends when in need of emotional support. She also occasionally spends time in 'alternative play' and confides in the special needs learning support assistants.

Sarah can however be up and down in terms of her emotional stability and was described as 'walking an emotional tightrope'. She has been in foster care on a number of occasions. Sarah does show some verbal outbursts in pressured situations and does run away from situations when pressured. She did however show a strong survival instinct and appeared to be very self sufficient when left to her own devices.

She did show some attention seeking behaviours (shaving off her eyebrows) and taking into account all her difficulties the A/SenCo feels that the 'safety net' was in place (through the special needs department) when Sarah needed help and support.

KIMBERLEY.

Introduction.

Kimberley is in National Curriculum Year 5 and on stage 3 of the Code of Practice for emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Drawings produced and their titles.

D1 - 'Upset'.

D2 - 'I Happy'.

D3 - 'Football - Kimberley'.

D4 - 'Birthday Party'.

Emerging themes.

Kimberley's emerging themes and constructs were as follows,

*** Nice People - Nasty People.**

Nice people are happy and feel great. They can be helpful and play with you, sit next to you and help you to do things. You can ask them for help (in class), have lunch with them and they run to help you when you are in trouble in the playground (D1).

Nasty people can upset you (D1) when you are playing outside and bully you. Being bullied by nasty people means being kicked, punched and chased and ends up with you crying.

*** Friends who are helpful people - Messing around people.**

Helpful friends tend to be the following type of people.

- They play with you outside (football and hide and seek).
- They can be helpful by running over to help you when you are being bullied. (D1) They might say "looks like the girl over there is crying, let's go and see her. "
- They might tell teachers that you need help, that someone is "beaten you up."
- They might help you by asking the bullies to say sorry.
- They can help people who find their school work difficult (eg with their

writing).

- They can help people to stop messing around in class (eg, throwing things) so they can then become a helpful person.

- Friends help you because they think you are also a friend to them.

"I would go over to help someone else if they were crying, I'd want to help.

They help me and I help them."

* Resolving conflict in peer relationships. This can occur through the following,

- Tell teachers I want to make up.

- Teachers then tell them (the bullies) when they are on their own that I want to make up. That is, not in the publicness of the whole class or group.

- Say it to the bullies themselves that you want to make up. Saying that "I'll be your friend if you don't kick me." Kimberley considers that this is "easy to say, but hard to do."

- Friends could help by inviting other pupils to play (eg by asking) "do you want to play?"

- Some teachers (Miss ...) have 'a nice way to sort things out' and can also tell the bullies off at the same time.

- Friends can help by ,

Breaking it up (trouble between pupils).

Make them be friends by coming together.

Help you stay away from each other .

Encouraging you to not run away from bullies, but actually play with them.

Play with them and be together.

Do things together.

* Nice people - Not nice people.

Nice people are lovely and nice, helpful and are friends. Friends are helpful inside the classroom where they sit next to you and help you with your work. They can also be helpful outside in the playground where they can support you against bullies and play with you. They care for you (running

to help in D1), be your friend and you can be their friend. Special friends are those who like you, hang around with you, call for you, help you make up, break up trouble and help you stay away from the troublemakers. You can then help to pay them back for helping you. (By being nice back to them).

Not nice or bully type people want to get their own way and can hurt you and hurt your friends. They can be lonely people who don't hang around with anyone, are sorry sad people and know when they get into trouble. They can interfere with you, stop you playing and hurt your friends.

*** Worried - Happy.**

Worried people are when there are bullies about. You can feel 'not secure' and feel cold. Bullies are all around you and you can end up being lonely on your own.

Being happy you can feel safe and protected, you can hang around with your friends and keep away from the bullies.

*** Play - Not play in lessons.**

If you play or mess around in lessons then you can get told off, get a warning and end up being moved to another table.

'Not play' is when you work in lessons, listen and do as you're told.

Concluding Thoughts.

Reflecting on Kimberley's thoughts about school,

-) All pictures had friends included even those which asked for opposites.
-) Kimberley was happier to draw rather than talk. A reluctant cautious talker who perhaps did not see me as a friend or friendly trusting adult.
-) Friends are important and appear in all pictures where they can serve a number of different roles, since they appear in all pictures, eg;
 - They can support you in adversity.
 - They can help you celebrate when at a party.
 - They can play with you in a team game or be with you just on your own.

-) There can be different ways of resolving difficulties,
 - Tell the teacher, who then asks the bullies to make up.
 - Ask to make up.
 - Friends ask the bullies to make up.
 - Friends ask people to be included in play activities.

-) People who mess about are perceived as bullies who are lonely and are 'separated off.' They get into trouble and know when they get into trouble. They interfere with people when they are playing and can stop you playing by kicking you .

-) Being a friend is similar to having (needing/wanting) a friend. That is, you can help and be helped both inside the classroom and outside in the playground. You need friends at work and at play. They can help resolve difficulties in relationships at play and help you with your work.

-) Life for Kimberley is mainly about relationships both within the classroom and in the playground. Interactions and social relationships are important.

Playing with people is the most important thing in school. When asked about what is the most important thing about school Kimberley replies "Playing with people everyday, ... lunch times, ... break times." There is little however about school in terms of learning in the classrooms and curriculum related matters

A/SenCo Discussion.

Kimberley was described as a pupil who saw learning as unimportant and tried hard to avoid work except when in the SEN department where she enjoyed the work, but can still be unpredictable in terms of her application. She was not necessarily a particular challenge to staff in class, but her behaviour is a problem during unstructured times where she exhibits sexualised typed behaviour. She talked openly with her peers about sexual matters and drugs in school and referred to her boyfriend in Year 8 (At the

local comprehensive school) and how they have 'done it'. She hints at who she is involved with, but then tends to game play by saying "I've been shagged by ..." but, then refuses to say who she means.

Kimberley mixed mostly with older boys and girls out of school and both her elder sister and brother have attendance problems in secondary school. She can also however be verbally and physically challenging to her peers in school. Kimberley was not particularly close to any staff in the special needs classroom, but did comment about her problems in a way which she intended can be overheard by staff. She did however share her thoughts in a more intimate way with her class teacher and the class learning support assistant.

SHANE.

Introduction.

Shane had a statement of special educational needs which described him as having low to below average cognitive ability, delayed receptive and expressive language skills and a range of complex social, emotional and medical needs. Shane's complex and significant needs were initially well catered for in the Infants school and during Years 3 and 4, but eventually at the end of year 5 he moved to a local special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Shane was able to take a full part in the study before moving schools.

Drawings produced and their titles.

Shane showed himself to be an active and helpful subject in the research despite his learning and language difficulties. His drawings were as follows,

Session 1.

D1 - 'Sad' not happy in a mood.

D2 - 'Outside playing football', playing when it's Wednesday.

- D3 - 'Kindly friends'. Hide and seek with Dad at home.
- D4 - 'Playground and Bullies'. Sad when people beat me up.
- D5 - 'Home'.
- D6 - 'School' with Shane, Claire and Catherine.

Shane used his pictures in an interesting and unusual way in that he changed the titles and constructs he placed on them as we discussed and used them in the second PCP session. They served therefore as a 'fluid' product which helped him verbalise his thoughts about school at different times. It is worth noting here therefore his alternative titles which he used in our second discussion.

Session 2.

- D1 - 'All happy' at home. Me, Claire and Catherine.
- D2 - 'Bullies', me getting beat up. Sad, when people misbehave I can't stand it.
- D3 - 'All sad' at school and home.
- D4 - 'Playground and bullies'. (same title as session 1).
- D5 - 'Home, a big house'. Good people at home playing, coming over to play.
- D6 - 'School classroom'. That's me as a person and my friends playing.

Emerging themes.

The themes, constructs and thoughts which follow are from the conversations during session 1 and PCP session 2.

* Friends - Not friends.

Friends are people you play with (power rangers / football), you can be happy with them. They can be Claire or 'my dad.' They are mates who don't wind you up, but help you when you get beat up (My mate M..... helps me).

Not friends are not kindly and do real fighting. They are bullies and cause you to be sad. They are naughty people who do things wrong. They can

also be sad people if they can't get you. (An interesting comment for a boy with his described difficulties). They are people who wind you up and call you names like 'stupid' and 'fatty one'. Shane expressed the view "I like to stab em and kick em."

Dad can be both friendly and not friendly. When he is friendly he is a very kind Dad, "he gives me food and biscuits and kisses and cuddles." When he is not friendly he "tells me off, sends me to bed, smacks me and kicks me."

* Good boys - People who misbehave in class.

Good boys do work, do what they are told and what Miss K ... says.

People who misbehave in class can cause teachers to get upset. Miss K ... won't 'have it'. They can be shouted at by teachers (but the teachers who shout are not naughty), sent to the head teacher, get a letter sent home and even send the person home. They are naughty people, bad boys, very naughty people. They are 'fighting', shout at the teacher, cheek her back, call teacher names and 'hate her'.

* The playground.

People who are good in the playground are those who don't fight. Those who are not good in the playground fight and hit you, they are naughty.

* Upset (in the playground) - Not upset.

You can be upset and sad (D4) in the playground where there are bullies.

Claire can be upset because people hit and push her. She's not naughty and she gets sad when people beat her up.

Not upset is the same as being alright and helpful. You can be helpful by being a good person and helping to 'cut a fight out' (me [Shane] sometimes) and by being helpful to the teacher. You can be 'helping Miss K... out' by shouting (back) at those people who upset her and then make her happy. Shane stated "Miss K...is nice, treats me nice, helps me out, helps everyone out. In subjects and tests".

* Bullies.

Can be both naughty (bad) and not naughty at the same time. They can bully in the class by bullying my mates, fight them, fight them in the class. They can bully in the playground when they try and get you and beat you up and make you feel sad, but can also end up sad themselves when they can 'never catch you.' They are not my friends. They beat me up and they think I wind them up, but 'I don't wind them up'. They call me "stupid and fat."

* Happy - Unhappy.

You can be happy at home with friends. You can be happy in class, but not in the playground.

You can be unhappy by being bullied at home, in the playground and in the classroom. You can't be happy in the playground, Shane stated, "they treat me like dirt in the playground, like piece of dirt."

* People who treat me nice.

My teacher who helps me out, helps me do subjects and helps me do learning. Helps me, other people, whole class and everyone gets help

* Happy - Sad.

Happy is when you are playing at home, to go home and play, meeting friends at home and playing. You can be happy when not getting beaten up. Sad is the same as not nice when you get bullied and called names. You have to tell the teacher then.

* Making school a better place.

- Stop people getting bullied in the playground, get teachers to stop em.
- Bullies to stop, "I'd stop em actually." I could stop them by telling a teacher.
- They could stop it themselves.
- They can get told off, keep them in , send to the head teacher's office, keep em in.

- More time in the 'special needs hut.' This is a 'good place' where you can be safe and play and help tidy up, you can help Miss E.... and Mis F... . Shane states, "Oh, when I get beat up in the playground I stay in here..... in the special needs hut." (Shane comes here when he is bullied and has the chance to tidy up and the chance to play. [See A/SenCo discussion]). People treat me nice here. Shane admits that even people who go to the special needs hut can be naughty at times, but can also be "helped to be good." By getting better behaviour by doing jobs, helping and giving out letters.

* People who don't need help - People who do need help.

People who don't need help are 'good behaved', 'good person', excellent, learner people who can help others. They learn easy, do as they are told, have a brain to do the work and want to learn. N ... he's a good person , he can do everything and doesn't need help for maths. People who can do work that's really hard. They are excellent, good behaviour and learning people. They can help me, help other's, they can 'learn you' and help you to understand the work. Shane stated "What like learnt everyone, even learnt me."

People who need help are those who find learning hard. Shane volunteered that he does found learning hard sometimes.

* People who misbehave in class - People who don't misbehave in class.

Bad boys misbehave and beat people up. Miss K don't want them in class and they could be out for a whole week. Shane stated "Miss K won't be happy, won't be having it", she gets upset by people who like fight, cheek her back and when they call her names. He continued that "they like bully her, call her thick, call her like ... and say cor hate Miss K"

People who don't misbehave are good in class. They do as Miss K... ask them to do. They do their stuff and do what they're told.

* What is a 'Good' - 'Bad' person.

Shane says he can be both good and bad at the same time and at different times. Good when he works on a computer and when he helps Catherine at art.

Bad when he calls people names, but then they get me and then I feel sad.

He stated, "I be good and bad sometimes misbehave, get told off. "

* Good boys in the playground - Not good boys in the playground.

Good boys don't fight and can cut out fights. They are feeling alright type people who help other children.

Not good boys in the playground are naughty boys who shout and fight, they fight me and beat me up. They do everything to me. Shane stated "I get upset and sad, I tell my mum, tell Miss K. who then tells em off. "

* Good learners - People who are not good at learning.

Good learners are people who are well behaved and do as they are told.

Shane says it is important to have brains to learn, to find work easy and to be good. Good learners are in the words of Shane as follows, " The have got brains and they work."

People who are not good at learning tend to misbehave and to not do as they are told. They can be stood up, sit at a table on their own. Shane has an understanding of how these misbehaving people are dealt with, "Miss go and sit us on the carpet and talk about behaviours and that." Shane felt that this type of person was 'not me' anymore (as if he has learned to improve). He has got better by helping when Miss K asked him to do jobs, by getting stuff out and reading etc.

* Tell me more about yourself Shane.

I can be a good person and a bad person at the same time. I'm a good person when I'm on the computer, I do help other people (Catherine), help them with their learning and their art.

I can be a bad person in the playground when I call people names, but I'm getting better with my behaviour now that Miss K has given me jobs.

Concluding thoughts.

Shane used his drawings in a fluid or flexible way to describe his feelings about certain situations that are important to him. He transformed the meanings of his pictures to suit his discussion so that D1, D2, and D3 can have both sad and happy elements. He also used these pictures to represent ideas and themes both at home and at school.

During the PCP discussion he liked all his drawings to be available and in view at the same time on the table and referred to different aspects in different ways. He also added to old pictures and created new ones.

Further thoughts about Shane were as follows,

- He often gave tangential answers to many questions.
- He enjoyed being listened to and being recorded on the audio cassette.
- He created new drawings and added to old drawings as we talked.
- He knew his own mind and despite his language difficulties gave full and informative answers.
- He was able to go from a concrete to a deeper explanation despite seeming unable to engage directly with the triadic or the Landfield exploration in the PCP discussion.
- Initially he appeared as a confused thinker, but as the discussion and analysis continued it was clear that he had a deep view on a number of aspects of his life. I initially felt the original discussions were of a poor quality (March 1999), but as the analysis process continued (November 1999) I felt that the data was much deeper and informative than previously thought. Deeper levels of expression were sought and achieved after the initial concrete understandings of drawings and conversations had taken place.
- Shane gave his pictures multiple meanings and they seemed to become part of his conversation, discussion and explanation. Just as in a conversation they seemed to ebb and flow , to change their explanations and

to serve many purposes as the conversations changed. They were truly a flexible and fluid aid to support his thinking and talking.

- Home is a happy place where you can play. School is a sad place where you can be bullied.
- He has the resources to help other people and to change himself, but is unable to take a position where he can see how other children are able to change themselves.
- He talked, he drew and responded well to supported direction in our conversations. He had a strong viewpoint and wanted to express it. He took the opportunity and openly entered into our conversations.
- Shane wanted to escape from the bullying. He displayed a sense of needing to be needed and wants to be included as part of the social and academic group.
- A worrying development was that Shane thought his Dad was not friendly, hated him, told him off, sent him to bed, smacked him and "beats me up and kicks me."

A/SenCo Discussion.

This discussion helped to provide an alternative understanding of Shane's situation in school.

- * He was a very verbally immature boy who could over react in social situations. He can provoke and taunt other pupils in school, but ended up getting bullied both in and out of school.
- * He was easily attracted to and followed any poor social role modelling in terms of behaviour.

- * He 'bounced' from one poor interaction to another.
- * He had a conflict in that he tries and wants to be part of the peer group, yet at the same time wanted to be different.
- * He seemed to be a boy who was disadvantaged both socially and academically.

Appendix 2 b)

This section contains a further reduction and synthesis of the thoughts, ideas and constructs from all the cases.

Michael.

Happy - Sad (No one to play with).

Friends - Not Friends (people who pick on you).

Work - Not Work (doesn't write anything).

Work - Play (fun with friends).

Play - Not Play (not having fun with friends).

Danielle.

Cooperation.

Working together.

Unhappy indoors when not allowed out to play.

People behave in groups when outside.

Friendships and relationships are central to her life.

Happy - Unhappy.

Friends - Not Friends.

Cooperating / Sharing - Not cooperating.

Team - Not Team.

Kyli, W.

Happy in the Special Needs Hut - Playing on her own.

Her sister 'knowing it all' in the classroom. (Miss know it all).

Kyli is often alone, but would like to be playing with other people.

Giving and receiving.

Her sister is never alone, always has friends, toys and people to share with.

Kyli can be jealous of her sister.

For example, "because Tony and Chris like (sister) more than me."

Kyli defines being jealous as "they've got something that you want."

Kyli wants her sister to be jealous of her when she brings biscuits home.

Daniel.

Happy with a mate, who calls round for you and can play with them.

Being bullied in school then you could tell any adult and specific teachers.

People can be happy playing with mates in school .

The drawings can produce new 'stories or understandings' in new situations. That is, sometimes Daniel sees the other person in the drawing as a friend then as a 'bully.'

Gareth.

Cross - Happy.

Revenge .

Getting into trouble - Doesn't want to get into trouble.

Doing work - Not doing work.

Wanting to get it right - Mr know it all.

Knowing stuff - Isn't good at knowledge.

Listened - Hadn't listened.

Woody.

Security in the (SEN) 'hut'.

Kept in - Allowed out at play.

Telling adults when being picked on.

Being believed - Not being believed.

Good pupils - Non listeners.

Happy - Unhappy.

Happy - Bored.

Sarah.

Listening and learning.

Listening and learning with friends.

Best friends - Bully types.

Teachers can not be friends.

Being upset when bullied, but not crying.

Friend - Not friend.

Being bullied into bullying other people.

Good learners - People who don't learn.

Bullies telling - Friends talking.

Solve bullying problems by getting rid of the bullies from school.

Kimberley.

Nice people - Nasty people.

Nice people - Not nice people.

Friends - Messing around people.

Resolving conflict with peers.

Worried - Happy.

Play - Not play.

Sheldon.

Best friends.

Nice - Not nice kids.

Improving things with a 'brain change'.

Being wanted - Being rejected.

Behaving well in school - Behaving badly in school.

Ricky.

Nice - Not nice.

Team players - Not team players.

People who don't join in.

Fighting people - Not fighting people.

Friendly - Angry.

Winning - Not winning.

Hard - Wimps.

Kyli, A.

Being calm in the classroom - Not happy outside.

Friends - Bullies.

Giving encouragement - Not helping.

Being on your own - Communicating with others.

Feeling good about yourself - Bullies don't feel good about themselves.

Liars - People who don't lie.

Horrible people - People who are not horrible.

Calm - Rough and tumble.

Mason.

Sad - Not sad.

Bullies - Not a bully.

Safety and feeling safe. (In the A/Sen 'hut' and 'alternative' play time).

School as an unhappy place.

Making school a better place.

Not nice boys.

Shane.

Friends - Not friends.

Good boys - People who misbehave in class.

Playground can be good and not good.

Upset (in the playground) - Not being upset.

Bullies can be both naughty and not naughty.

Happy - Unhappy / Sad.

People who treat me nice.

Making school a better place.

People who don't need help - People who do need help.

People who misbehave in class - People who don't misbehave in class.

A good person.

Good boys in the playground - Not good boys in the playground.

Good learners - People who are not good at learning.

Appendix 2 c)

This is a full transcription of the second session personal construct discussion with Kyli,A. I felt this was one of the strongest conversations at this level. Kyli remembered our previous meeting and recognised all her pictures. The conversation we had was as follows;

T = Myself. K = Kyli.

- T Here are the pictures you drew the last time we met.
- K Yes I drew some pictures of happy and sad.
- T Did this one (D2) have a title ?
- K When people call me names.
- T How could we describe that.
- K When people like be nasty to one another and say like, call people names and be nasty and you know.
- T Which one is you.
- K There (points to heavy shaded picture in D2).
- T ... and that's someone being ...
- K Being nasty.
- T Here's a different one (D1).
- K Yeah ..., I'm, er when I'm in trouble I go and play on the computer like and it makes me feel better.
- T Yes, you put quite happy there (in D1), and then we finished off by doing a different picture and there it is ... a really really busy picture (D3). Who is in that picture?
- K Er, that's my friend G ... who I sit with on my table and that there's M ... who's usually a bit mouthy.
- T Is she?
- K Yes and that's me.
- T What are you both doing?
- K Playing tennis.
- T and G's ... playing ...
- K Netball.
- T And you called it.

K Fun, games and activities.

(At this point we move to the drawing comparison).

T Sometimes we can see things that are similar or the same and sometimes we see things that are ... (Kyli finishes my sentence)

K ... different.

T So let's look at (D1) and (D2).

K Both things like people do.

T This one you are on the computer and in this one you are ...

K ... arguing. Er, but they're, they ... er both to do with me.

T Can you think of another similar thing in the pictures?

K They're ... um ... there are both activities you do in school.

T So school activities.

So what would be different then?

K One is like with another person and one's on my own.

T What would be different about the things you are doing?

K That's just like I'm not speaking there ... but ... on this one it takes like both ... I'm speaking to another.

T Are you speaking in that one (D2).

K Yep.

T What would you like to say in that one ... back to them?

K SHUT ... UP (Emphatically).

T So a straight forward answer. So let's see if we can see a third different thing?

K And um another thing is you.

T What about what sort of a mood they are in.

K They're like ... that one she feels like really broken hearted (D2) and this one she feels like she's calming down (D1).

T Excellent.

Now let's look at (D2) and (D3).

Let's look again and talk about how people are feeling and thinking.

K Um ... in this picture like all the people are saying like other words to each other like and 'you can do it' and the same in that picture.

- T So in both pictures people are talking, even though they are talking about different things.
- K One of them like ... um ... this one is and that one's different because, that one is like something that you ... it's fun to do (D3) and that one it's not very fun activity (D2) ... it's ...
- T Fun playing tennis and things, but in this one it's different, what would you call it?
- K Bullying.
- T Or not having fun that's for sure.
- K Yeah.
- T Let's carry on.
- K That one is the same as that one because like it takes more than two people to start an argument and it takes two people to play tennis.
- T You can't argue with yourself can you?
- K No.
- T What about the way they are thinking. What sort of a mood do you think they are in (D3)?
- K Quite a happy mood and hot.
- T What about what mood she's in (D2 figure saying 'ugly')?
- K Well I think, like she's really like enjoying herself ... cos she's like getting to take the 'mick' out of other people ... and like she's feeling good about herself ... cos she can't take it out on anyone else.
- T She feels good about herself.
- K Yeah.
- T And they're enjoying themselves as well, aren't they, but in a different way.
- K Un huh.
- T Let's look at some more differences.
- K Um ... some things that are different, is cos you can argue inside and outside and you can't play tennis inside, but you can outside.
- T So arguing can be done anywhere.
- K Yes.

- T Now let's look at (D1) and (D3). Are they the same or different, what are they doing, thinking, feeling and saying?
- K Things that are different are that people like when they are on their own they can speak to their selves, but like other people like don't get to hear it ... um.
- T So what do we call it when ...
- K Um ... communication.
- T ... people talk to each other, (D3). Yes like what we are doing now having a ...
- K ... conversation.
- T And in this one (D1).
- K Just speaking to myself.
- T What might be the same in the way people are feeling in these pictures ... (D1 & D3)?
- K This one is like she is not happy and I'm gonna try and get happier (D1) ...
- T So a bit happy.
- K ... quite happy, but also a bit grouchy and like.
- T You said that was a good way for you to calm down.
- K Yeah.
- T And here they're definitely all ...
- K Happy ... and in these pictures like, you can run around in this picture like, then you can run around and do all sorts of things ... but, and in this picture you're just sitting down with the mouse and things.
- T So they're different.
- K Un huh.
- T Here they are running around using up lots of energy and her you are sitting down on the computer using the mouse.
- K Yes.
- T So what do you think you might be thinking about here that you might also think about here.
- K Right, well on this picture a bit like ... that when she said you start

feeling bad about yourself ... like and ... like when you've been doing something wrong like and then ... but in this picture you feel 'I aint done nothing wrong' and I'm not going to worry about anything ... and then you can feel good about yourself.

T So here you might be a bit worried (D2) and here what would we say is the opposite or different?

K Just like forgotten about things.

T How would you feel about being able to forget about something that wasn't very nice that happened to you, ... you would feel ...

K Um ... quite good about yourself, cos like then you don't have nothing to like have a reputation about.

T Feel good and don't have to worry about your reputation.

K Yeah, that's right.

T Now if we think about this person here in this picture (D2), now in a way you said she was feeling quite good about herself wasn't she.

K Un huh.

[At this point we move from the triadic / comparison structure to the Landfield / pyramiding characterisation. Kyli links the conversation directly to her drawings].

T Why do you think this is?

K Cos like bullies ... when they got nothing better to do they just like take it out on other people and then like they say well I haven't done really nothing wrong ... cos and then like they try and blame other people for starting it.

T Well they blame, don't they.

K Yeah.

T So what sort of a person is a person who blames people?

K A liar.

T A liar, yes ok. What other word could we use to describe a liar?

K ... um ... er ...

T What would a liar be like for example in their head or in their mind?

K Um ... um ...

T Let's imagine.

- K Yes, a bit ...
- T How would you describe them?
- K Like a bit ... people who ... um ... do like bully and that, and talk out of turn, they get like people who ... they are people who have a reputation. They get a reputation in school.
- T They could have a reputation could they?
- K Yeah ... and that they try and get people up into their gangs and that. An it don't work on em and they start on other people. They go and tell the teacher that you have done something. When they go up into a different school then they try and pick on other people and they'll get picked on from older people like at B ... and that.
- T Do liars have any friends?
- K No, I don't think so because like people say to ... um ... other people, that they are the ones who really get told off for like lying.
- T So they get told off a lot then.
- K Yeah.
- T If someone wasn't a liar, what sort of person would they be?
- K Um ...
- T What words could we use to describe someone who doesn't lie.
- K Um ... it would be ... it depends ... cos some people can be like nasty and not lie, but some can be kind and lie, and they could be ...
- T They can be kind.
- K Yeah, but they could be horrible as well.
- T So a bit of both really. You're right they could be a bit of both, yes life's not always straightforward is it ...
- ... so if a person was kind and didn't lie, what sort of a person would they be?
- K Um ... she well ... that would be like a nice person ... you, you could trust or something and be a friend to.
- T Yes, a friend you could trust.
- K Cos if you give a secret to a horrible person, then who doesn't lie, then they could still tell someone.
- T So if you gave a secret to a nasty person, what would happen?

- K They would get it on around the school and all that and then everyone would know about it ... then they would come up to me and start picking on me and that.
- T So they would tell and then you would get picked on.
... Lets look at picture 3 (D3) now ... so what are they all doing together then?
- K Um ... they are having like fun and like saying how they like playing with people.
- T Having fun and playing together then.
- K They can trust each other.
- T What sort of people do you play with?
- K Um ... a bit of both ... but ... both ... but, like some people start and say "Oh shut up" and all that ... and I say fine if you're gonna be like that I don't need friends like you ... like
- T So if they were friends ...
- K ... they wouldn't tell you to shut up or anything, but some ... some people who were my friends would tell me to shut up like as a joke and all that.
- T Would that be ok?
- K Yeah that would be ok.
- [At this point the PCP discussion really seems to becoming a true conversation. Kyli is able to anticipate my questions and finish my sentences for me in the natural 'ebb and flow' of a conversation].*
- T Ok.
- K Like if we were messing around that would be alright.
- T Sometimes some people can say things to you ...
- K ... they don't mean.
- T and you don't mind.
- T What sort of a person would actually tell you to 'shut up' and be nasty to you and wasn't your friend?
- K Um ... er, like a horrible person.
- T Would they have lots of people to play with.
- K Er ... no, sometimes they would and sometimes they wouldn't ...

like ... they act all smart and say come and hang around with me, don't hang around with her like ... but ... sometimes the other people don't take that, they say 'NO', well like not if you are gonna give like people bad reputations and that ... and to their work like and interrupting people like ... when they are doing those things, then I say I'm gonna say I don't trust you no more.

T So they can interrupt and give reputations away and that.

K Yeah.

T And what people say things back to that?

K An then they ... they then ... when they got a whole gang like ... then the people outside of school say they have heard this and I've heard that and all the gossip goes around the school and that so.

T It's like gossip.

K Yeah.

T Is it true or not true?

K Sometimes.

T A bit of both.

K Yeah.

T Now would this sort of person have many friends?

K Um ... some ... well yes and no (laughs).

T You're right.

K Cos like people who are bullies, like people like themselves who are bullies and people who aren't bullies they try and persuade them to help them, but some people fought it and some people don't.

T So what would you call a close friend then ...

K ... someone who you can rely on and like...

T How could you know if you could rely on them ...

K ... cos, ... er what, what they done is ... um ... people who you couldn't rely on we just said to em is "what we're gonna do is ... If we can rely on you, what we're gonna do is ... we're gonna tell you a secret and if you can keep that secret away from anyone else ... and if I hear that anyone else has been, has heard it and then I can't rely on you", that's what we've done before and like people have

said they`v`s stuck to their word and they`v`s done that ... and then for being that I let them be ok.

T So keeping a secret and sticking to your word are important things .

T Yeah.

T What would be the sort of person you couldn't rely on then?

K Someone who like ... if you go out on a test with me like the one I just said.

T You give them a test about something you have to keep secret.

K Yeah and they tell someone straight away and then don't keep their word to it.

T So tell them something not too important then.

K Yeah, that's what I done, I said ... um ... I said ... do you want to come up to London Zoo with me, like that I weren't really going, and then you mustn't tell anyone, but she went and told everyone nearly, so I said there I couldn't trust you so you're not coming to London Zoo with me ... even though I did really go a couple of weeks later. I didn't have her on cos I didn't think I was going when I told her, but later on I found out I was going.

T So if you can't rely on somebody. Do you think they (the people you can't rely on) have many people to play with?

K No.

T Why wouldn't they?

K Cos if someone told em something ... like personal ... and then they went and told everyone like, then they wouldn't be a friend, straightaway then.

T That's the trouble then they would lose their friends ...

K ... and then that person who had given that personal thing ... that ... that then she go round telling everyone ... then that you can't rely on that person. If you like hear like ... if you were some ... like fairly close to the school or something ... or like she takes the 'mick' out of ... and then people take the 'mick' out of you and then the other people say ... don't take the 'mick' out of what she is wearing, cos you are wearing just as bad as her ... don't you get in argument, cos

like it's not like you are in conversation. I can handle it myself. I can fight my own battles.

T Yes ...

K ... so ...

T What lesson would you be in now.

K Literacy hour.

T So we should finish soon. Maybe you would like to do one more drawing before we finish. You can choose anything you like, you did these very nicely so a drawing of anything you like about school would be fine.

[Kyli produces her fourth drawing D4].

T And your title is.

K I like to learn.

T So what is happening in your picture today?

K That's me sitting at my desk ... with my sketch book ... my reading book and my English book.

T And what have you done here?

K Um ... there are messages on the board from Miss L

T So are you writing them down then?

K Yes.

T Do you like working with Miss L ... ?

K Yes she's my teacher.

T So what are you doing in your picture then?

K Just waiting at the desk ... for someone to pass me something ... for someone to pass me my pencil.

T Which picture would you best like to be in?

K Um ... this one (points to D3 - 'fun, games and activities')

T And which one would you least like to be in?

K Um ... that one (points to D2 - 'when people call me names').

Our discussion ended and Kyli went to her next lesson.

APPENDIX 3.

THE A/SENCO DISCUSSIONS.

a) Letter to Gill with suggested ideas for our discussion.

b) Transcription of our 'long' conversation.

a) Letter to Gill.

Dear Gill,

Please find enclosed a copy of the themes from my work with the 13 pupils in my study. I hope you have a chance to look through them before Thursday. These are the main issues that came out of each case and might represent the basis of our discussion, both at a group and individual level. I don't want to trawl through each individual, but might use particular pupils to illustrate an example. I would like to talk about areas such as the following.

- ◆ Do the themes have a ring of truth about them?
- ◆ Do they reflect what you know about them as individuals and as a group?
- ◆ Is there information there that surprises or informs you?
- ◆ The 'so what' question, about what we (you / I) can do with the information.
- ◆ How can my work have an impact on the pupils who took part? At an individual level or more globally for them as pupils with special needs.
- ◆ How can I make it useful or more informative for the school?
- ◆ What areas would you see it influencing?
- ◆ Are there any practical thoughts that spring to mind as to how the information could influence practice?

- ◆ What might change in your practice in the light of my work?
- ◆ Are there whole school issues here or is the data just relevant for the Sen Department?
- ◆ Should the data go further such as the SMT or the teachers who teach / taught the pupils?
- ◆ Are there any policy implications?

These are just thoughts please feel free to add your own as we talk and do point out any gaps in the work. What should, could I have done differently or better?

See you Thursday. Regards Tim.

b) Transcription of our 'long' conversation.

This is the full transcribed 'long culminating' interview. This discussion took place in my office away from the school during the early autumn 2000 where we were undisturbed and able to focus on my work with the pupils in the research.

T = TM. G = A/SenCo.

T.

"doing the work and getting round to talking about that seems a long, long way away particularly for individual pupils. What I did was I did some drawings with the pupils and then we came back and had a conversation with them and the conversations are in this Appendix here, all transcribed and I have selected two or three to submit in detail. Then I took it a stage further and reduced it even more so, so that it was more accessible - the conversations and then finally we came down to what we have got here which is a copy of what you have got. In a way that might not make a lot of sense to you because it is the sort of synthesised raw data right down as low as I can get it, but I thought it would give us a starting point to talk about."

"I have tried to type out a framework there that I thought might be useful but we don't have to stick to it at all but I think one thing we have to focus on from my point of view is 'so what!' 'What use is all this - very nice but time consuming - lots of hard work but so what!' and in a sense it has got to be a 'so what' for the school and the special needs department."

"I wondered if any of the individual information sort of rang true for individuals?"

G.

"I think so. Mason's I think was particularly revealing and reading what you have written, those bullet points I can see that, that does particularly apply to him, although he tends to sort of generate a picture of being a very happy child. He obviously does cling to us for safety, coming into the special needs room and trying to avoid conflict on the playground. Those are the strategies that he has developed. He sort of homes in towards adults who are going to make him feel safer. Most of these children, looking at it, have all done that. They have all orientated themselves towards coming in to the special needs room particularly at play time and lunch time and some of them when they have left class either with or without permission have then moved pretty quickly to the room where I think they know there will be somebody that they can talk things through with."

T.

"Yes. I mean I think that came out with virtually all the cases that they did see the special needs department as a safe place or a haven or sanctuary, rather than another place of learning."

G.

"They don't just see it as a learning place do they."

T.

"In all the work that came out there was very, very few mention of teachers

or classrooms. In all the drawings I think, a total of fifty drawings, there possibly were three that were in a classroom. Some were indoors, but the majority were outside during unstructured times and that is what they wanted to talk about in their experiences of school."

G.

"What mainly about the unstructured times?"

T.

"Well yes, about the unstructured times the social interaction. They didn't say that, but if we look down through some of the cases they all want to talk about the concept of relationships, friends and friendships. So what I think is that all these pupils have a view about school. They want to tell you, but they don't have the sophisticated language and in a sense that can point to something that the school can work on, providing pupils with an emotional vocabulary for example. Even with people like Michael who when I first met him would hardly say anything at all."

G.

"Very withdrawn."

T.

"And yet I was quite confident that he has an understanding of when he is happy and sad and that is related to when he has got no-one to play with, so playing is an important construct for him even though we thought he didn't really engage very well socially."

G.

"It is interesting that, that little girl who wasn't one of the ones that you were focussing on. I spent some time with her earlier this week because she had said, "there was no point in me coming to school" and I said, "Why?" and she said, "Well I haven't got any friends" and it was all around playtime. When she did have friends she seemed to fall out with them so

we looked at her whole day and found that actually the play and lunch time were just a very small part of it, but to her a major part of it. You know, she was happy in all of her lessons even though she is a child who has special needs. She like a lot of these, didn't see that as being the main point of school at all."

T.

"No. I think in all the work, the only one who focussed on being inside and being taught was Kyli."

G.

"Kyli W ... or Kyli A ... ? There were two Kyli's."

T.

"Kyli A With Kyli W ... I was most concerned about her attitude to her sister. It was like hate."

G.

"Very much so."

T.

"Deep rooted hatred and that is all she wanted to talk about and those very powerful emotions are very dangerous as well. No. Kyli A was the one who wanted to talk about being calm in the classroom, having relationships in the classroom, wanting to relate to her teacher and she was one of the most articulate ones as well, but then that is fair enough."

G.

"Kyli had, had a very troubled year before she had met up with you. In fact it started off quite badly because she had transferred into the school from another area and her mother had written down the wrong birth date so she had gone into the wrong year group for a short. Only a short time. At the next most convenient spot we put her into the proper year group so she

really was supported quite a lot. May be that is why she had the opportunity to build up the relationship with the teachers and the adults in the Year Group because they were aware that she was having to make that change. Looking at all of them, every single one of those children has been a child that has had problems on the playground, either with bullying or being bullied or both."

T.

"Sometimes it is difficult to separate them out. Because if you get bullied or picked upon then it is quite common that you might want to go and make somebody else feel as bad as you do and continue that cycle."

"I was interested particularly in what we might call the less articulate ones - Michael, Daniel, Mason. Most people were able to express themselves with things that are very important to them and being bullied might be a thing that wants drawing out further say with Daniel, Michael. People who pick on you ... , because we tend to say bullying and then just accept it but there is such a wide form of it and that might ... , that as a whole school they might want to try and draw out as a theme and differentiate in terms of when people are describing their experiences, you know, about what did really happen, taking into account that they have got limited language skills because as you say some of them do the bullying and some of them get bullied. It is on a continuum really isn't it?"

G.

"Very much so."

T.

"I was interested in Danielle's continual refocusing on wanting to work together and in the light of what we know about her and currently it is strange. Isn't it?"

G.

"It is because that is the one area that I think is probably the one that needs developing the most with Danielle. We have tried to encourage her in the afternoons in her sessions with Carol, to come in and to actually play with one other child or an adult and another child on one game, a board game and she usually wrecks it before the end. She will change the rules. She will hide the pieces."

T.

"She is very much in control."

G.

"Very much so. Very much so. She then gets quite annoyed and angry when they say, "we don't want to play anymore" and so children will quite openly say, "I don't want to start a game with Danielle" and that is what is happening to her at the moment."

T.

"She is actually making something worse that she wants to make better and in a way that tells you, or tells us that she is using inappropriate means or methods of trying to get what she wants. I do believe that she wants to be part of everything. Included with people in activities and wants to work together but doesn't know how to go about it and therefore can't and gets it wrong by trying to take over and take control. I think with her that if any individual work was going to be done with her from my point of view then I could always return to this and use it as quite a strong basis because it is not happening at the moment. She is not co-operating. She is not working together but you could take her back to a starting point to get her to admit that, that is what she wants to do. I thought that was an interesting enigma in a way with her."

G.

"She is part of the plan that Maria has put into action this week. Is that Danielle goes to the Family Centre in the afternoons because the

afternoons, being a less structured time in classes, she would opt out, run off, climb the fence, turning the whole of that into a game you know. Sort of come and chase me kind of thing. What happens now is that she goes to the Family Centre for some play with one of the play leaders over there and her mother is going to be part of that, because obviously it was recognised that it was the relationship between her and her mother that had to be improved before we could really move on much further."

"From the school point of view she has certainly tried a little harder in the last week in the mornings to stay in the group that she knows that she should be in but which she had begun to opt out of because again she kept wanting to come into the special needs room."

T.

"You must have asked yourself on a number of times, 'What is it about the special needs department that attracts people like Danielle?' "

G.

"It is strange because they do see us in a role where we are being authoritative. I mean, although they know that we listen and we try not to make any judgments so they are allowed to say what they want to say. They do see us being authoritative."

T.

"But I would sense that they don't see you as someone who wants to control them. Whereas may be that is some of the tensions or conflict in the main classroom."

G.

"Maybe also that she knows there is an element of choice. You know, if they come in then they behave in a particular way and they are welcome and that we try to fit them in at extra times, give them extra time but then

they need to respect that and they have to respect other people's time there."

T.

"But those are quite sophisticated concepts aren't they?"

G.

"They are - very."

T.

"Choosing behaviour. Respecting other people's rules and sometimes some pupils can't gain those by just absorbing them. They have to actually be taught them. Do you ever have any sense that you are overtly teaching those skills or is it because you have an expectation and the majority adhere to it so when someone new comes in they pick up the norm."

G.

"They do. They do tend to pick it up. I mean for instance in alternative play we don't have a set of rules up on the wall but the children, the regulars that come in, are very quick to introduce new children and to explain to them what they can do and what they can't do so in a way it is done by the children."

T.

"They teach themselves. The pupils teach the other new pupils."

G.

"Yes."

T.

"Now that is again a very important statement isn't it. To articulate that throughout the whole of the school would maybe be another useful theme for the school to pick up on rather than just either thinking it happens, knowing it happening or not knowing it happens. Actually being able to say

well that is what does happen. Here are examples of it. To be able to pick that up and record some examples might be quite useful. Because it does happen. We know it happens but seeing it happen makes it much more powerful and then you can link that to the pupils that might not even know they are doing it."

G.

"Yes I am sure they don't know."

T.

"Not at a conscious level."

G.

"That's right."

T.

"They might be doing it at a un-conscious level and that is a tremendous boost to people isn't it. When they think the reason someone is behaving well is because you showed them."

G.

"I mean the nicest thing is when they sort of make a judgment themselves that the less confident children that choose to come in, when they say is it alright if I go out to play? Nobody is stopping you from going out to play. You are playing in here. You can play out there. It is just your choice. If they do go and we know they have found the confidence to go out and play more openly in the big, wide world then I will say, 'just keep in touch'. Pop back and let me know how you are getting on. Don't forget the door is always open."

T.

"That is another two important points I think about the department is, the door is 99% always open and that you do want to know. It is a cycle of

interactions, rather than a linear one where you send someone off to do something and then you don't want to know. You do want to know and they know that and each feeds on each other. What I thought was interesting was those ideas about friendship and then people who are not friends and then you said about having respect for other people came out with a number of them about developing the need to listen to other people, not just adults but other children as well. That did come out with Gareth. He very much understood the difference between how to listen, the benefits of listening and the downside of not listening. He is quite a confrontational character in that respect isn't he."

G.

"Very much so."

T.

"In terms of wanting to get his own way but at the same time showing compromise in that."

G.

"With somebody like Gareth he will assume that he knows what the answer is going to be and eventually when he has listened he realised that it may not be what he thought it was going to be. He will jump to conclusions which a lot of those will. Kimberley for instance will. Sheldon did."

T.

"Sheldon, yes but again listening is - sometimes as teachers we just expect children to be able to listen but they need to be taught to listen."

G.

"They need to learn how to listen."

T.

"Learn as a skill and then underneath learn the benefits and understanding."

You see Sarah made a link between listening and learning, rather than just listening in terms of respecting somebody else's opinion. She was able to talk in terms of listening and learning and then listening and learning with friends. So both as an academic side to learning in the classroom but learning from your friends as well by listening and sharing with them. She also gave a very good interview."

G.

"Yes, she is very articulate. She is used to having a one adult audience. She does a lot of work and it is quite amusing to watch her sometimes because she is a very powerful girl. She really does control quite a large group of children at times."

T.

"In their own way these are all powerful characters because they have particular needs and they are high profile and they change situations as soon as they come into them and so they are powerful children in that respect."

G.

"Even Michael in his own way!"

T.

"Well he is sort of archetypal in a way by influencing things by not saying or doing anything."

G.

"It's amazing - although he is a child that could easily have been a victim, how many of the bullies in his Year Group actually looked after him and made sure that Michael had this or had that or knew where he was supposed to be. There were odd incidents of teasing or name calling but sometimes I wondered on those occasions was it Michael's sensitivity. They hadn't meant anything really personal by it - it was their usual banter."

T.

"You touched there on something that came out again with almost everybody was that they had a range of problem solving strategies in terms of friendships or social interactions in the playgroup about how to solve them and I do get sometimes the sense within school that children aren't looked upon as having their own answers. They are just told what to do."

"In this piece of work I think what came out for me very strongly was that they have a number of strategies for resolving conflict with their peers and that again is another theme I think that school could, the whole mainstream school could benefit from in terms of, they could solve their own problems in quite appropriate ways. Either trying to include people in and making friends with them, avoiding them because of too much conflict, seeking staff to help and not necessarily always senior management staff, staff they have got relationships with. All those sorts of ideas came out quite strongly and I sometimes think we could have missed that. I think some staff think they are not old enough or haven't developed well enough to know that, but they all came out with it."

G.

"It is interesting the school council was set up some time during the last term and the children put a lot of thought into who they wanted to represent them. Who they thought would be fair. Children that would take their ideas forward and would confidently report back. It wasn't always the ones that you might have thought they would have gone for. Likewise there are some children who use some peer mediation who again they are quite confident to go to and within their own Year Group or their own class to help them to sort out troubles. One or two of them if you observed them wouldn't necessarily appear to be the wise choices because they were quite powerful manipulative children, but most of them I thought they chose particularly well."

T.

"You have to still retain the sense of order in terms of staff making judgments about who is and who isn't most appropriate. The energy has got to come from within the children. It cannot be imposed upon them. Is there a fair representation of pupils with special needs on the school council? Is anybody there that you think 'Oh that's good'?"

G.

"No not really."

T.

"And in a sense there should be, shouldn't there?"

G.

"There are two who from each class, so that would be eighteen. There are two there who definitely had problems themselves in terms of relationships on the playground but who have sort of come through it and may be that's why they were chosen because people could recognise the successful change in them. The way they managed themselves."

T.

"That's a useful model for anybody isn't it? To be able to come back and say I have experienced something similar to that and now it is different for me. I have moved on."

G.

"It puts a lot of pressure on those children though."

T.

"Right. You think it makes them regress?"

G.

"It can do, because I suppose they feel they are in the public eye more and

the onus is on them to behave and to get it right. Because everybody is only too quick to point the finger if they are not and it is a long way for them to fall if they do transgress for a while. Although you can try to point out to them 'well nobody can be perfect all the time'."

T.

"Well its impossible isn't it? I think what you are moving towards now is a greater understanding of just how complex the whole situation is in terms of peer relationships and working together because people can't get it right all the time because we don't as adults do we? Even though we are able to articulate a whole range of problem solving skills and abilities we should use. How often do we ourselves find the easiest way out is to argue or avoid situations."

"I thought it was interesting that Kyli A ... was able to have a sense of empathy with bullies. She talked about what sort of things made her feel good about herself, but was also able to think in terms of bullies who don't feel good about themselves."

G.

"Yes, Kyli has been quite a bully herself, with boys as well. Very powerful. In fact she made life pretty unpleasant for quite a big group of boys last year and took great delight in it and people like Daniel for instance. They thought it was wonderful. It started off as a game but then Kyli would get the upper hand."

T.

"You get drawn in."

G.

"And Daniel would come crying."

T.

"And he is very vulnerable in those terms isn't he?"

G.

"Very much so."

T.

"Unable to stick up for himself and just end up crying or running away wouldn't he?"

"She was able to talk in terms of people who bully don't have any friends because that is not the way to make friends, but on the other hand they would have some friends who were the same as the bully."

G.

"The same as them"

T.

"So she was able to hold those two contractions in place at the same time and Gareth did a similar thing in terms of being good at something and not being good at something. You might not be good at behaving very well but if you were consistent then you were good at being consistent in not behaving very well. I thought that was quite sophisticated for primary pupils to be able to think in those terms rather than the Masons of the world who think in black and white. It is either this or that and Sheldon with his opinions that is either this or that. Some of the others were able to think well you know, it could be different."

G.

"Well I mean both Kyli's, Sarah and Gareth had to arrive at the school and make new friends amongst children who had been friends and been at school together all their school life. Woody was like that as well and so it was particularly difficult for them because for some of them it was more

than one school that they had gone to so that they had, had to get into a new group, or become part of a new group more than once."

T.

"And that is hard for anybody isn't it? They could almost do with a sort of an emotional induction pack. How to Survive."

G.

"Because the evidence is now that even if they moved classes, weren't necessarily with the same group within that year at least they were part of the same Year and they had been right the way through so there were familiar faces."

T.

"But in all of that it is hard for people coming in to a new group to fit in."

G.

"Absolutely".

T.

"Especially if you were not very good at standing back and watching what the culture or what the currency is and you barge straight in it is easy to disrupt peer groups but there is also something there about the peer group having their own standard of what it feels like to be on the outside, to be alone and to be included and I think that did come out again in terms of empathy. Lots of the pupils were able to understand what it is like for other people but at a level that they might not have articulated before and again that might be a sort of a theme in school for sort of thinking about just ourselves how it is for other people and were quite good at that and surprisingly Shane. He was very good at talking in terms of what it is like for other people, particularly for his teacher. How she felt when pupils weren't behaving well. He was really about the only one who had that empathy for adults. The rest of them seemed to have a sense of admitting it

for other pupils but not for how her teachers might perceive it."

G.

"He would often come and talk about home, talk about problems at home and how eventually he would say it was caused by him - the reason his mum was crying was because of something that he had done. He was aware of that and he would then be aware also if he had upset his teacher but he could talk about it in quite a ..."

T.

"He is quite a sensitive boy even though he makes mistakes sometimes he admitted that sometimes he caused his teacher to be upset but he couldn't control his behaviour all the time but he was quite sensitive to other peoples needs. But that other point about 'in the work it was very hard to focus on just school'. I gave them an open view in terms of they could do their drawings about anything to do with school, but quite often they took it beyond school into home and relationships at home and included families in their pictures."

G.

"Every single one of those children has got something at home that you, that I wouldn't want my own children to have to live in. Every single one of them,"

T.

"And in a way therefore school has an even more significant impact upon them because of what it does offer which is a sense of stability and respect and equal opportunities to come and learn and the special needs department in a sense takes that even a step further doesn't it?"

G.

"It does. It is now and again you have to draw them back and talk to them about what is appropriate to talk about and what isn't or what you need to

do if they start to confide and share things that you might need to take further. They will sort of forget that you are more than just a listening ear and interestingly what nearly every member of staff in the school does is when a new child arrives one of the first things they do is bring them over to introduce them. Even if they are not on the special needs register or they will get children to bring them in a play times so that there is a natural meeting. They know that we are there and it is surprising how quickly they come in and they fit, some of them for only a couple of days and then they are out on the playground, some of them hardly come in at all but they always touch base."

T.

"And that extends your role in terms of it being a whole school issue. Pastoral care is what we are talking about. It is a whole school issue."

G.

"Very much so."

T.

"And not just a special needs issue. Children with special needs are not the only ones who need pastoral support."

G.

"Something that was reflected in the way they talk to you that I feel is something we need to develop is the relationships between the class teacher and the children and I think what has happened and I think most teachers are aware of this is the curriculum pressures that have been put on people, they have tended to push the relationships to one side and expect other people to deal with them."

T.

"That sort of has a conflict for me in a way because I don't think - its like love isn't it - its not limited - there's not only a set amount to go around."

You could still have curriculum pressures and still care for children's emotional development. It does not have to be a time allocated slot does it? It is about just how you treat people and so I think that even if there was more time or less pressure I still think that some teachers need to raise their awareness of pupils emotional needs."

G.

"We have tried to give a higher profile to Circle Time to develop that so that people have the opportunity so although you say it shouldn't necessarily be a time tabled slot that is a bit of an open door then to do that. I know in my days as a class teacher if I felt that there were conflicts within the room I didn't wait for it to be time tabled whether it was Literacy Hour time or what I would say I think it was time to stop and move the furniture back and talk."

T.

"But that again is where the two meet. The ethos of the culture or the hidden curriculum meets the taught or the prescribed curriculum in terms of 'I can teach you how to listen as a young person' rather than just expecting you to listen and telling you off when you don't listen. I can give you the skills and then you can practice it and then I can remind you and then when I do expect you to listen, I can remind you how to do it and we might get there rather than thinking, 'you are not paying attention'. Do children really know what it is like to be still and at ease with themselves and pay attention and that's where you do that in Circle Time isn't it? So I am not against that in terms of teaching those skills or time tabling it but again it is not a contradiction is it? The way we treat people in school is regardless of whether it is a pupil or another member of staff or a classroom assistant or playground assistant it is the same in terms of respect isn't it?"

G.

"It should be. It isn't always but I really do feel for the lunchtime supervisors sometimes. I think the children definitely see a pecking order

in school. No matter how much you try to raise the profile of assistants and supervisors I don't know is it because of the culture, is it because of ..."

T.

Well it is an organisation - school is an organisation - its an institution and therefore it is going to have people who have different responsibilities and different roles and sometimes that means that the senior management team have to deal with it and not the dinner ladies."

G.

"Interestingly the children who have got one to one support say Matthew for instance. He very much recognises that Sally or Karen are the people that can make decisions about whether he stays in the classroom or where he does his work and who communicate with his mum or dad to say how things have been going and that has worked incredibly well and a lot of the other assistants have picked up on that, that if they take a higher profile, be more decisive about what is happening with children the teachers are quite happy about that usually."

T.

"They don't find it a threat?"

G.

"One or two might. Others are more than happy to have that support."

T.

"That's another issue isn't it, in terms of managing other adults in your class if you are a teacher? In terms of it becoming a teaching team and deploying the adults in your class in a different way rather than just child minding."

G.

"Allowing them to make decisions."

T.

"I think that ,that is important so that pupils do see that they have some power and control in terms of their future."

"Now do you think there is anything here that sort of comes out and wants to be broadened out in terms of feeding back further to the school?" There are initiatives in school like the school council which are whole school issues, not just special needs issues."

G.

"There is a sort of a mood at a push towards trying to set up a nurture group type environment for the children to offer that sort of provision which I think could be very beneficial. In a way its what has been happening but in a more informal way I suppose. I have got reservations because I see it almost again as some members of staff saying, 'so you can go there to get your dose of medicine' and as a class teacher I would want to build on those relationships myself so may be there are some training issues here."

T.

"There is a tension in school isn't there in terms of pastoral care or nurture groups or listening to children talk about their social experience in school. It is somebody else's job."

G.

"Then you go back and carry on working."

T.

"Go off and have a little bit of respite but hurry up back to the real world which is teaching and learning to pass your SATs. Whereas from here I think the evidence is that children of this age are pre-occupied with activities out of class. If I knew that as a teacher then it might change my style of teaching or my understanding of how pupils are rather than just expecting them to be better learners in a formal situation and from here I

could sit down and say, 'well I know'. We might believe Primary pupils are more interested in their social experiences but here is the evidence collected over thirty hours of work with the pupils. So that might be useful for you if you want to try and use that through me in terms of evidence. What is the evidence about asking children about their views in school is that they are more interested in the social unstructured times than they are the formal learning times and other things that come out are that they are very able to understand the importance of relationships. How to resolve conflict and so on and that could may be form a foundation of some training, rather than it just having an impact upon the individuals that we have talked about. See in a way I am preaching to the converted it has got to go beyond here hasn't it. If it is going to be of any use to the school it has got to go beyond."

G.

"That's right. You mentioned going on the training day (helping pupils with emotional difficulties stay in mainstream school) at Taunton and I have got a place on that and I was hoping to take Sally (learning support assistant) who is one of the behaviour team at school and a governor and working one to one with a child, but she unfortunately didn't get a place on it so it is just me going down and although I will enjoy it very much I wondered whether it would be better for other members of staff to go or that may be we ought to have some sort of training. Sometimes it is more valuable to have a day out isn't it? To go somewhere else rather than have the Inset day in school. I sometimes wonder what we achieve."

T.

"What has happened very much here today is that by you coming here the quality of this whole sharing of information is far superior that it would have been, no matter how long you tried in school. We couldn't have done it. We tried didn't we?"

G.

"Surprisingly it was quite difficult to get out because I noticed the momentum building up through the morning with problems being presented to me. To try and stop me from coming out I am sure."

T.

"But going back to your other point it is great that you are going on the Rob ... day because it will confirm lots of your thinking and you will think, 'Oh yes I do that' or 'Oh that's nice I can introduce that' but you need to get some people there who need to be challenged in their thinking and he can do it and as you say, moving away from the site can do it. So may be that ..."

G.

"I think one of the most successful Inset days that we have had recently was one when we went to E ... where we shared the costs with them for the 'accelerated learning' day and that was good you see and I know that a lot of ideas that he shared with people that day are actually being used in school now."

T.

"I know, I have seen them and in fact that is something that could feed back to the Project isn't it? So what would be the next stage to see how much it costs for individual trainers to speak?"

G.

"Yes. May be again to try and team up with other schools and for us to go there or here."

T.

"Three or four schools ..."

G.

"You have a conference room here haven't you?"

T.

"The conference room here is fine."

G.

"That would be appropriate because people also tend to behave themselves more and focus professionally on the day instead of relaxing."

T.

"I've done Inset at school with teachers on their home territory and ..."

G.

"They are dreadful. They are worse than children."

T.

"Yes. You think well - look at the model you are giving here and you tell Daniel off for behaviour like that!"

G.

"It happens all the time."

T.

"So that could be a training issue and as you say with the accelerated learning day - that is being used in the classroom. I am sure what comes out of the Rob L ... day will, if people go along and listen to him."

G.

"May be that would be something worth pursuing then?"

T.

"Yes"

G.

"Because there are other schools that have similar problems to us."

T.

"But even if they don't perceive themselves as having problems it is something they should know about."

G.

" Or the need for development, rather than see it as, as problem, the need for development."

T.

"He is talking a language that people understand and it would be very, very useful." ... "Good. Okay, shall be stop there. If anything else comes to mind, we can always just mention it when I come in but I would like to think of it being able to move beyond me - move beyond the special needs department and have an influence perhaps in areas in school that I don't normally come into contact it. May be when it is written up in a more readable form I can give some copies to school and let them read it and then ask for feedback on it - whether they think it makes sense. I am going to write a discussion paper about it and it might be useful just for school to have that anyway."

G.

"Yes I think it would."

T.

"This work goes beyond an assumption, 'Oh we know that children bully each other in the playground' but this takes it beyond that in terms of their understanding of what bullying is about for example. It is current. It is about the pupils at H ... It is about the pupils that the teachers know. It is real. It is real evidence. It is not a book written in a different school. It is about your pupils as a whole." *(Our conversation ends).*

APPENDIX 4.

RESEARCH DIARY EXTRACTS.

This appendix contains a selection from my research diaries kept during the following periods.

February 96 - October 96. (E835 and exam).

Sept 96 - Jan 97 Drawing up the research proposal.

March 97, accepted onto Part B.

May 97 - March 98. Start year 1 Ed.D.

May 98 - Final report submitted, feedback July 98.

Sept 98 - Start Year 2.

Sept 99 - Start Year 3.

Original comments are in normal type with additional comments added in italics as the diaries were being typed up during January to May 2000.

March 1996.

During the course 'Educational Research in Action' I began to develop my interest in the use of children's drawings in the process of an educational psychologist's assessment. (Drawings as a means of communication had a personal impact on me on a number of previous occasions, but mainly as an adult.) During the course I moved from looking at how psychologists obtained and used drawings to how I might collect and use them through my own work with pupils.

April 96.

Concerns about the quality of the questionnaire returns.

If I am to use and interpret drawings, I need the children's views and understandings about them and to document under what circumstances/context they were drawn.

Read 'Tales Marvellous Tales' which said that don't do ethnographic work unless you like reading and writing, I begin to doubt my ability to cope with this at Ed.D. level. That is, I don't think I read very much or wide enough, although I do write enough. Seeking out D as a critical friend.

Interviews produce three types of data. Herbert (1990) p 53.

- 1) Observations of a limited sample of behaviour manifested during the interview.
- 2) Data about the clients present situation and predicament.
- 3) A view of their life histories.

E 835 p 85. Some pupils may not see school as a place of learning, but as an arena for socialising, ... for which learning may be counterproductive. See also p 84 - 86. Werthman (1965) ??.

June 1996.

If my research proposal is a case study approach then I will need to consider how I can triangulate and validate my findings. The collection of data should take place within a context which should be acknowledged.

I still feel at this time that I want to use the messages in children's drawings to support, confirm or contradict what we have learnt about the pupil from somewhere else.

As I type up these hand written notes in January 2000, I realise that the two separate questions above (messages from drawings and information from elsewhere) have actually become intertwined in the current research where drawings, talking about drawings and a personal construct conversation form a holistic approach to working with young pupils.

I am still searching for the methodology which analyses drawings in a psychoanalytical way.

This eventually shifts to using drawings as the tool or vehicle to support other investigations and illuminations of pupils' viewpoints.

July 1996.

Begin to think about and target schools for the preliminary study. I feel it is essential to invite schools who trust me and I have a positive relationship with to become involved in the study.

September 1996.

Reading Ken Shaw's monogram I feel inspired.

Chapter Title ? Ernst monogram.

Drawing up and submitting my research proposal.

I continue to think about how I can obtain the self perceptions of disaffected pupils through using their drawings of themselves in school. I also feel that I should use the drawings to support a taped discussion with the pupil. This could form part of a contribution to an overall psychological assessment and help to inform a greater understanding of the whole pupil.

The drawings can become the documents, which are then contextualised within the school setting and the recorded interview which are in turn supported with field notes and 'other' information.

I initially considered this could be an observation of the pupil in the learning context, but later replaced it with the A/SenCo interview.

Case studies - an interaction of factors / events.

835 SG p 88 labelling, p 97 photographs.

The work coming out of E835 focussed on looking at other peoples practice and a psychoanalytical approach to using drawings. This needed to be shifted in Years 2 /3 to looking at my practice and using the drawings in the context of a discussion or interview. The initial research proposal therefore still focussed on what other EP's in their practice, yet recognised that the child's interpretation of their work and their experiences was becoming more important.

October 1996.

The following tensions begin to emerge.

My current research proposal focusses on what I and other EP's do or have done in their practice whilst the child's interpretation of their experiences is gaining greater importance. I therefore recognise the need to gain new material from the pupils and to listen to their voice. So I need a change in my thinking and my practice to how I go about obtaining the voice of the child.

I initially thought that this was not a piece of action research, but I was going to illuminate, investigate and explore this area. Yet now I realise I am going to change my practice which will also have an influence on the participants and the school.

I am realising that the psycho dynamic approach to understanding children's drawings is too large an area and I lack a great deal of knowledge. It also to a certain extent conflicts with the personal construct paradigm. I begin to look at using drawings in my generic case load and how they can support pupils who have poor verbal skills. I also feel that it is important to collect a number of drawings to provide depth and breadth in terms of the pupils views.

November 1996.

I consider the dilemma of researching on the special / inclusion line of study and selecting pupils on the special needs register which infers that I accept the labelling of pupils as having special educational needs. How do you research pupils with special educational needs if you don't accept a group of pupils as defined as that? Yes, but to accept the categorisation for the purposes of research, but to challenge the labelling of pupils as an excluding rather than including term.

Am I seeking views of self.... views of school... or views of self in school?

This is an emerging research question. A possible title might be ... 'The

disaffected pupil's perspective of them and their views of school.' My research questions should really be about how pupils view their experiences in school.

I now feel that this change of seeking pupil views myself is becoming evidence driven in that I am seeking new knowledge and no longer merely exploring or illuminating. The drawings become the products by which I can pursue the process of enquiry which will involve changing me, my practice and those who participate in the research.

November 1999 - The dropping of the psycho dynamic approach to the study took a long time, but I now realise I never really had and still don't have enough knowledge or expertise in this area. It also sits more comfortably with an art therapy and counselling approach rather than a personal construct understanding of pupils' experiences of school.

December 1996.

Briefly my thinking has shifted as follows,
From

- * E835 - involved finding out from other professionals who use drawings about what they do.
- * Research Proposal - again finding out from particular adults, but also seeking pupil views.

To

- * Revised Research Proposal - A Child focussed case study approach which has naturally influenced methodology and method of collecting drawings and other supporting information.

February 1997.

I am exploring the Ravenette work of 'A drawing and it's Opposite' and start using more personal construct psychology in my generic case work. Received a copy of his article by personal letter from Tom R after writing to The Psychologist magazine.

March 1997.

I am still awaiting acceptance onto the Part B of the Ed.D course. Invited to register in March. During April I move from using Kinetic Family Drawings in my work to asking for drawings which show a picture of the pupil in school. This I feel is another significant shift in my understanding, thinking and practice. I ask pupils to draw a picture of themselves in school

May 1997.

Begin Year 1 of Part B. (May 97 - March 98).

Following reading Beaver (1996) I sense a shift in my thinking where I develop a greater understanding of the use of children's drawings and Personal Construct Theory in seeking other people's viewpoints and trying to achieve shared viewpoints. This is supported in my practice and research knowledge by developing my skills in 'the asking of questions.' The work of Beaver had a great influence (together with Ravenette) on the movement of my research towards a personal construct methodology. I also appreciate that I am actually researching my own practice and developing assessment techniques for working with young pupils.

May 1998.

Submit Stage 1 Final report. Await result and feedback.

I still feel that it might be useful to return to the Stage 1 cases in Year 2/3 and use personal construct theory with additional drawings. Again I realise that this is impractical and I see Stage 1 as a stand alone piece of work which trialed some aspects of the whole study.

I do trial the data collecting technique in my generic work with a range of cases. With the following adjustments however,

- * No initial element is offered. I just ask the pupil to draw a picture themselves in school.
- * This is followed by a semi structured discussion and explanation.
- * The opposite is asked for in the form of 'not ... (eg bullied)' etc.
- * Further elaboration is then asked for using the two drawings.

July 1998.

Receive feedback.

Notified of passing the preliminary study Year 1 and I register for Years 2 and 3. A further realisation that 'there will be no syllabus'.

September 1998.

Following the realisation of the impracticality of revisiting the original Year 1 cases (a possible thought following feedback on the preliminary project from year 1) and the developing sense that the drawings obtained from the pupils may best be seen as a tool which facilitates and promotes further discussion about school life; I visit the school selected to be the focus of the study. (I had always intended to develop the study in years 2 and 3 in this new school and had therefore actively avoided trialing any of my techniques there).

I have a real sense of the research starting as I negotiate access to the school and to the pupils who will participate. This confirms in me that the research process has really started and represents a positive move away from thinking that research is purely data collection in terms of my work with the individual participants. Yet there is still a sense being unsure and of the unknown ahead in terms of wanting to get drawings and taped interviews. This I feel reflects my insecurity and lack of confidence in that I feel I may not end up with what I set out to obtain.

Yet in January 2000 as I work through my diaries I recognise the need to have a certain level of anxiety and anticipation in the research process and now feel that this was healthy in that as a research I need to be open minded about what data is collected in a qualitative study. Also no matter how the study goes there will always be data and it is up to the researcher to make sense of it and use it in an informative way.

There is a definitive sense of moving towards a case study approach to the research although I am still wrestling with what would be an appropriate

number of cases. All pupils are known to me through discussion and I am also due to see a number through my generic work with the school. However, the drawings and subsequent PCP discussion would all be new data.

After an initial three sessions with individual participants I note the following.

- * A growing sense that the drawings are becoming more a part of the process of research as they act as a tool within the context of a discussion, rather than as a product which is to be analysed in a psychoanalytical way. That is, to support the pupil in raising issues and unconscious feelings in a non verbal way which can then be used to facilitate their own understanding and meaning of their work where they can put their own constructs on the pictures. I appreciate that I am no longer searching for drawings with deep meaningful content which can be psychoanalysed out of context and have external constructs being placed on them by people both outside of the context of the process of collection and of the research.
- * My research and generic work are becoming intertwined and blending to the extent that I feel I could treat all participants as general referrals to the Support Services (they are all already in the system and I am likely to see most of them in both roles) and then aim to offer recommendations and suggestions which help to inform their individual education plan.
- * A thought (again) about matching the data from Y1 to Y2/3, but soon discarded as impractical.

October 1998.

How have I changed things.

Questioning qualitative values in me, eg listening not telling, pupils as co participants, my general style of work, giving and not just taking away.

Thinking about researcher reactivity and how I am changing both as an individual and as a practitioner as the research progresses. The personal developments are linked to my developing relationship with the adults and pupils participating in the research. With the pupils it seems that familiarity breeds familiarity or is it contempt, but the more I visit the pupils in the special needs 'hut', the more they think they will be seeing me.

Relationships develop and inevitably they can risk clouding the research, yet surely qualitative research is about finding out about people and entails getting close to them, coming along side of them, developing empathy and asking them to trust you by developing a relationship with them.

Researching with people means giving of yourself as well as taking away of views, thoughts and opinions. The relationship is dynamic and interactive not static and linear.

Procedurally the method of data collection continues to develop with the already described tensions, such as pupils who bring their own agenda and stick to it. My practice and research are becoming blurred. The difficulty of getting pupils to participate with a sense that they have both understood and given informed consent. My thoughts are that informed consent is something that is sought at the outset of each meeting with a pupil, is continually sought during each session and also throughout the whole research process.

I have learned that asking questions and then listening often involves waiting some time for the answer. To resist re-framing or asking a secondary question too quickly, thereby confusing or interrupting the participant.

I still do have a feeling however that at the moment I am 'taking away' and not giving in the research process. Is this truly collaborative research? The next phase of interview / discussion with the school A/SenCo will involve sharing of information and feedback.

I still have a hope to return to the pupils in the Autumn 1999 to corroborate the information gained and confirm or question my interpretation of it. This is a laudable consideration, but will not be practical. The research has developed in that data collection will continue until the end of the summer term (further PCP discussion with the cases and A/SenCo interview) and analysis will dominate the next term to Christmas 1999. This failure to return to the pupils to validate the data may be a weakness, both as a practical issue and as an ethical issue. It may well be a Further Question following the completion of the study to return to the pupils to respectfully inform them of 'what I think' in terms of feeding back to an audience.

I have an acute sense that I am not 'living with my data' (Prosser 1998, ie becoming a visual psychologist) in order to understand it effectively. That is, to have it continually available in a visual form in order to be able to return to it easily and absorb new meanings and to bring new understandings. Again a reasonable but impractical expectation. The process of collecting data, analysing and interpreting it, revisiting it and reviewing it as a continual as a continual fluid dynamic model seems a long way off when space, time and work commitments limit my level of interaction.

November 1998.

I am beginning to see the development of the data collection method in the light of critical feedback of the preliminary study in year 1. Changes that have occurred are as follows,

- * I am becoming more confident and competent with allowing pupils to provide free school based drawings for the first pictures.
- * This really does then become draw and talk within the context of personal construct theory.

I am finding it difficult to separate out the research process and data collection from the generic school referrals. Three cases are moving to Stage 4 and the A/SenCo wants to discuss them, often during my research

appointments with her. It does lead to a confusion in my role, but I need to retain flexibility in order to respect and respond to the school staff needs.

I have used my research method in a number of other cases in other schools and feel it has been relatively successful. That is, using it as a part of the assessment process without the constraints of the research parameters.

December 1998.

I find I am struggling with the writing up process. I feel that the changing nature of the data collecting methods and the developing design and method is adding to my lack of confidence. I feel like I am both wondering and wandering around in the research design. My work in the school is well received in the special needs department with the A/SenCo being particularly supportive and interested, but it seems to barely touch the rest of the school in terms of class teachers and senior management.

Perhaps this is an indicator that I should be actively involving the class teachers in the design to help with triangulation. (Jan 2000).

This lack of contact with the class teachers is a concern for me, not only do they not show an interest in my work they actively seek on occasions to interrupt my interviews with the A/SenCo and introduce other issues.

Following attendance at a Personal Construct Psychology course at Manchester University my thinking develops and my understanding of my research grows.

Still concerned about what I am going to do with what I have been told and how the school as an organisation will benefit. Nevertheless I do feel that there has been the creation of a substantial opportunity for listening to and respecting the views of young people on the special needs register at the school.

There is a continuing meshing of my work in terms of collecting data in the research process and the cases referred to me as a generic educational psychologist.

First phase of data is collected. Some cases become referrals to me in my general role. My practice is being influenced by the research process and continues to develop both with new referrals in the school, in other schools and with my return to the research cases in the second PCP phase. A dynamic, interactive developmental model exists which is psychologically healthy, but is difficult to relate to, to know which influences which (eg research informing practice or / and practice informing research) and which can blur the research focus and research questions.

I still feel that I am finding it difficult to move from the concrete to the psychological in terms of gathering an understanding of pupil's feelings, beliefs and values. In terms of Ravenette's thinking 'to transcend the obvious and illuminate the ordinary' (Ravenette 1993). This is a definite target for the PCP interviews which will take place in the Spring of 1999.

January 1999.

* I am still questioning my own ability to move a pupil's thinking and talking from the concrete to the psychological. There may be a link here to the different stages of self concept development related to age .

Hinton (1991) considers that pupils at this upper age of the Primary school tend to offer descriptors of the self which focus on aspects of physical and intellectual competence, social acceptance and behaviour. As they move to the transition years between the primary and secondary phases of school they still focus on academic competence, physical appearance, athletic competence, peer acceptance and behavioural conduct. [Jan 2000]

* Primary pupils of this age may not be able to think in depth about their own feelings and then articulate them. They may find it difficult to go

beyond the concrete. Is this why I feel stuck.

February 1999.

Submitting 06 - agree I'm drowning in much more than just data.

Despite the difficulties I encounter I feel very relieved. I am beginning to recognise the anxieties of preparing for and doing research. It's almost that with the difficulties the pressure was actually taken off and I expected nothing to work and almost wrote it off. The Michael interview in a strange little room in the main school, with no one expecting or prepared for me, hijacked in the corridor by CL and the Daniel incident, noisy disruptive pupils next door with an LSA, overheard my name being used to try to calm the group down - awful data collection conditions. But I feel the interview went very well, It worked.

***Also it's not solely about data collection,
it's about learning through data collection.***

March 1999.

Today on the 8th of March I feel I have had the most difficult PCP interview. Mason brought his own agenda and stuck to it. I found it hard, but felt my work was too subtle for his limited abilities. I felt I been unsuccessful in that I hadn't effectively used his drawings and collected any real data.

I feel the whole nature of my research is changing as the research and my generic practice continue to become intertwined. This confuses my role both with staff and pupils. Perhaps I was not clear about my roles as I started the study. My frequent visits to the special needs department seem to just make me more accessible to the participants of my study who often appear in the department during 'alternative play' and the literacy hour. From the 13 cases involved in the study, 6 are known to me through the staged assessment procedure whilst 2 others are referred to me for therapeutic work. Every time I visit to meet a new case I invariably bump

into another case who wants to know when I will be seeing them again.

This sense of being wanted conflicts with my views that when some pupils are with me they want to bring their own agenda and not follow my structure for PCP conversation. This feeling of gathering poor data may well stem from the following,

- * Collecting data but having to leave the analysis until much later in the study.
- * A sense of proceeding in the study, but not really knowing what information I have obtained.
- * The confusion of working and researching in the same school.
- * Having too high and unrealistic expectations about how the research should progress. That is, not allowing for a dynamic understanding of the development of the method and design; nor allowing for the pupil's own powerful agenda.
- * An anxiety about the lack of control over the agenda the cases are bringing.
- * Being too close to the participants through my dual role in the school.

With all this self doubt I again feel that the preliminary study should have been more closely linked to the Years 2/3. This is at this stage impractical, but on reflection may well be a consideration for how things might have been done differently. My current concerns regarding apparent lack of data are put into perspective when I consider that it is not what participants give me under my terms, but what sense I make of what they bring to the sessions and give me, despite my attempts to control and construct the data collecting situations.

For example, when Mason brought his concerns about being bullied, being physically hurt, wanting help, support, sympathy and understanding; all of which were on his terms was I able to show true listening skills and subsume (to put myself in his shoes, to see through his eyes) and to suspend my own construct system to allow myself to listen credulously. Did I

respect the fact that Mason in attending my session was at the same time seeking the sanctuary of the 'Fuzz Buzz Hut' (Mason's reference to the reading scheme he uses when in the special needs Department). He had a need to have his own voice on this occasion and to air his views despite my considerable attempts to return to my agenda. He also showed a need to talk about his family instead of just school matters. He answered my school based questions with home based answers. During this discussion I realised the importance of retaining flexibility in my work, to be creative in my use of personal construct psychology. That is, when my structures don't work, to be prepared to go 'elsewhere', to allow other drawings, discussions and activities to occur. To blend methods in a flexible way.

My concerns seem to stem from feeling that I have weak theoretical understandings and underpinnings (in the light of tutor feedback), poor practice in my data collection methods (each interview seems to develop in different directions) and a sense that the qualitative paradigm doesn't fit easily with these pupils (they may not be used to being asked for their viewpoint and to being genuinely listened to). On the other hand the complexity of their lives and situations should actually sit more comfortably with qualitative work. I am convinced of this, but I find it hard to see the wood for the trees.

If I was able to accept more comfortably the pupil agenda then I would be truly experiencing qualitative research in its more true form. To go with their agenda, to capture the moment, to seek their genuine responses may truly seek their views and their 'voice', but I still have my own research questions which have to fit in somewhere. My skill is to look with meaning into the data and make sense of it regardless of the initial perceived lack of quality or content. I have to look and 'see' what I have been given. That is, - collect it, accept it, describe it, voice it, interpret it, understand it, apply it and use it.

And take it back, return it.

March 15th 1999.

Data gathering now feels more positive, I am regularly accepted in school by the pupils in the special needs department; and my arrangements and organisation are going well in school.

March 25th 1999.

I have a growing sense that the more I go to school and come into contact with the participants as ordinary pupils in school then there is a certain over familiarity which leads to a lack of seriousness and appreciation in my work. There is therefore a continual blurring of my role as a researcher and as a generic psychologist in school. Am I confused in my role, am I losing status in my generic work, am I losing credibility and ending up as being recognised as a regular member of staff. That is, not an outsider with an insider's view.

I do have a greater sense that I bring my own values, beliefs and agendas to the research which can act as prejudices in trying to control the interview progress and pupil responses and contributions. I want them to fit into my plan (research questions and hypotheses) and when they don't I feel my research has failed. However I am beginning to appreciate that they have their own agenda which should contribute rather than conflict with my work. It is rich data which I should use as evidence rather than see it as conflict.

April 7th 1999.

I already have a sense that visiting the A/SenCo is more about her agenda and superficial data gathering about pupils; rather than returning to the school with data and findings in order to triangulate and validate my work.

Feb 00 - it is now clear that I must revisit the A/SenCo as part of the design to enable data to be brought back to the school. This is to introduce the 'so what' question about how my findings might influence and contribute to the educational lives of the pupils involved in the research.

I appreciate that it is important to return to a significant adult within the system to interview with data that is already 'drawn' out in some sense as findings. This is similar to the Sally Johnson (1999) where she refers to her research diaries where she explores general issues in phase 1 and seeks to elaborate on them in phase 2. That is, to continually focus development which leads to theoretical reflections in grounded theory. This process focusses on a limited set of themes which can be more fully explored. Am I doing this?

May 4th 1999.

Tomorrow I meet Sheldon in the research , but he is also referred to me in my role as the generic psychologist to the school. On that day I also plan to interview the A/SenCo regarding another pupil in my research. The two roles are becoming more and more blurred. There is a dynamic interaction between my case load and my research, my thinking as a researcher and my role in assessing individual pupils within school. It is becoming confusing as to where I draw the line in terms of my involvement, thinking and interventions with the two roles, particularly when they overlap with cases.

Sheldon is raised at the consultation meeting and becomes a referral through my generic work. I have already seen him through my research role. I accept a referral from school and see Sheldon in my generic role. This is confusing for me and I assume must be confusing for him. Am I in my role of researcher where I want to know what he thinks about school and (try to) appear non-judgmental, or am I responding to a school's perception of the 'problem' where the agenda is weighted in a particular direction. My rapport with Sheldon gained through my research is compromised with my generic work with a pupil who eventually becomes permanently excluded during the summer term of 1999. I wonder what his view is of this whole process.

This dilemma regarding my role begs the questions as to whether I should actually try to separate out the roles of researcher and generic psychologist;

or should I accept the tension and try to actually blend the roles? Does the information gained from the research influence the recommendations suggested in the generic work with Sheldon?

May 5th 99.

Who am I working for and what therefore am I doing?

The blending of the research and the generic work is confusing for me.

Again I say who am I working for. Particularly when I am working with Sheldon. The agendas have changed from mine to school to Sheldon then to 'mum'. I still have as part of the design to return to the pupil with my interpretations of their contributions to my research, but this is rapidly becoming untenable. The time limit is constraining (or is this my bad planning), but it seems impossible to fit in another visit to the pupil. Also this return aspect seems almost like a whole piece of research in itself. Nevertheless it would complete the cycle of research in terms of justifying and validating what I have done.

May 11th 99.

The school has entered a phase of development which is influencing my research. The academic Year 6 SATs results place the school at the bottom of the league tables for the county. The Education Authority support the school through an 'improvement project' looking mainly at teaching and learning (plus other areas). I am invited to join the project and feel that my research on 'pupil views' is one aspect of the project which is missing.

I feel that this may well become an aspect of action research. There is an argument for including the 'voice of the child' which has been missed by the authority improvement project. This is an opportunity to take the pupil voice back into school.

May 15th 99.

I still have a sense that I should be returning to the cases with my understandings during the Autumn term 99.

But as I type this in March 2000 I know it was a reasonable consideration in the design, but an unrealistic one considering my work load, the pace of analysis, the timing of the research and the 'juggernaut' as it moves forward.

Perhaps researching in a school where I did not work would help to resolve these tensions, but it would make negotiating access and gathering data more difficult. Again a tension that must exist in most research.

I continually carry around in my head however the confusion about who am I working for? The school, the pupil (in my research and /or in my generic work) or myself as a researcher in need of data. Also where do the pupil's parents sit in this whole process of pupils in school and as subjects in my research. They are regularly in my generic work, but are not in my research.

9th June 1999.

That finishes the second year work officially with the submission of PR 07. The next few months are uncharted territory, so I think we need to make our own maps (LC)!

June 11th 99.

Still finding it hard to stick to the script when interviewing the A/SenCo.

It is interesting to note that as I type these notes in March 00 and am planning to revisit the A/SenCo, I plan to hold the interviews in my office which could help to sort out some of the above problems. Also it might help to get away from the school atmosphere which seems to invade my work in a sort of overwhelming cloud of other issues. My role may also be seen as a researcher rather than the generic psychologist for the school.

A sense of arriving and moving towards the final year is a bit scary, with the year ahead seeming more difficult than all the other years put together.

A bit like walking in the valley to the base camp and then looking up at the mountain to climb. Not far to go but the most difficult and it's straight up (Nietzsche's mountain climbing analogy. Mediocrity - pain - fulfilment.)

19th June 99.

I continue to experience difficulties in gaining undivided access to the school A/SenCo, I am interrupted almost as a matter of course by class teachers wanting to talk to the A/SenCo or the head teacher, or by anybody else who just seems to want to interrupt and stop my discussions.

I can't help let thoughts from my generic work enter into my research world. Perhaps this is a case for researching in a school in which you have no investment or 'other' agenda.

7th July 99.

Have now moved to the next phase of the research, yet another piece of data to be collected, but at least a step further on. I am now meeting with the A/SenCo on a weekly basis to try and share and explore my data.

Interestingly enough she sees it as getting information back from me and I see it as getting information from her. In an attempt to turn it into both aspects by sharing and a sense of interaction. Possibly moving towards a type of action research where the information I am giving her can influence practice may be at the IEP level. That is trying to take the voice of the pupil back into school to be heard where it matters.

19th July 1999.

Completed the A/SenCo interviews which I think are a flaming shambles, they have been done, but not well at all, the structure was just too loose.

I did one interview without using any reference to the pupils or the cases. This was a sort of collaborative sharing to reach a joint understanding. In a sense I am becoming a critical friend to the school and A/SenCo, whilst I

should really be looking for one for myself.

2nd August 99.

As I continue to transcribe the PCP tapes.

The drawings are done, the pupil explains, I find themes in their drawings and their interpretations. Which we then work with together in a conversational style and then back into the drawings again looking for deeper understandings.

Criticising my own style of questioning.

On reading and transcribing the discussions I write as follows.

This was a long hot summer of slaving over handwritten transcriptions, day in day out - don't forget it - June 27th 00.

9th August 99.

I recognise the progressively improving quality of my interviews from the early ones such as Ricky where I was trying to do everything at once to the improved Kyli, A and W, and Sarah. These latter ones improved in the quality of the questions, less interruptions, allowing space for answers and a much more improved conversational style.

Asking for a fourth drawing allows the pupils to collate their thinking into a theme and may fulfill that function in PCP where they become more enlightened about themselves.

Nb, I've spent 100 times more time on the conversations than I have the drawings.

14th September 99.

A shift in my thinking that it will be impossible to analyse and describe all cases as I have done with Michael and Danielle. Transcribe yes, describe NO. This will end up as 32 thousand words.

Sept 99.

Data collection has been as follows.

3 Pictures, revisiting all cases and have used the Triadic and Landfield characterisation techniques. The idea of a fourth culminating drawing develops that seems to have a culminating effect of bringing the data collecting sessions to a close and bringing the thoughts of the previous drawings and conversations together. Perhaps there is some sort of a cycle here about - draw your feelings, talk about them which re-frames them and then portray this in a picture to record or document. For some pupils this was particularly pertinent. Eg Gareth, Sarah, Danielle.

Changes from Year 1 to Year 2/3

Working with individuals.

Follow up opportunities with each pupil.

Working with them as they produce their drawings.

Using conversations in both sessions.

Visiting A/SenCo.

Using a series of drawings.

Not imposing the elements.

Eliciting the fourth drawing.

20th September 99.

I have now realised and justified that my research is really about proving to myself that I can develop a tool which I can rely on and use in my practice.

To obtain good quality series of drawings with PCP interview back up. All of which then allow me in my practice to do projective work.

About a tool.

About my practice.

About the theory that informs me.

About validating myself.

A/SenCo interview is now serving the function of informing others and feeding back to the school.

23rd Nov 1999.

Updating the research questions seems to be a continual process, rather than keeping them set from the outset of the research. I still wrestle with the title as well, as this doesn't encompass the PCP conversational element.

To develop an assessment framework which helps pupils to be actively engaged in the assessment procedure.

January 2000.

My current work is aiming to meet the progress reports due this year. So in a sense I am reflecting on the work and bring the whole project together.

Feb 2000.

A strange feeling exists as I type up my reflections. I am typing up my thoughts as I progress through Years 1, 2 and 3 ; and yet I have new thoughts about how those experiences were. Is this true personal construct psychology. I am looking back and changing my thoughts and views about how they were. Were they as I first perceived them in my dual roles and confusion, or were they a natural developmental tension which I can reflect on now as I type.

The reflective research process can be a continual cycle which either ascends or descends into illumination or darkness. Where do you stop thinking about what you have done and also stop thinking about the thinking about what you have done? This reflection is a useful process, but where does it move from a theoretical and philosophical contemplation to a practical and pragmatic understanding of the 'so what' question.

I have wrestled with study, data collection and data analysis for years, but where does it end. I agree that I must critically reflect on my personal and professional involvement as a psychologist and researcher with young people. When do I say 'now I must make a judgment, make a decision and make an intervention' (suggestions and recommendations) which are based

upon my value and belief systems and by definition are value judgments made on other people's / pupil's lifestyles and behaviours.

I question whether I should be providing findings from my research which reflect my value system (beliefs and prejudices) and attempt to influence other young peoples lives in the direction of that value (my) system. The power relationship of adults within a young persons world is again brought into question. I enter the world of the pupil defined as having special educational needs and by definition being vulnerable within a system which adheres to a prescribed national curriculum in terms of knowledge and understanding and a hidden curriculum which is not necessarily in tune with local cultural norms.

23rd Feb 00.

Exploring the tensions that I feel at the moment.

Open ended-ness v Trying to be tight.

Discipline v Creativity. Researcher v Generic EP

Emerging designs as I revisit each aspect of the research.

Interpreting / representing other people's views.

Arguing at an intellectual level.

NO Syllabus. Only one source of feedback.

25th June 2000.

A big gap from February, but the dissertation is being written and rewritten and this has taken precedence. I have sort of caught up with myself and am now writing directly into the thesis. So again this represents a shift in the research process. I don't need to write about how I feel and then reflect on it, it just goes straight into the writings. Also the time between Feb and June has been taken up by typing the research diary and I have made comments alongside those as I type.

APPENDIX 5.

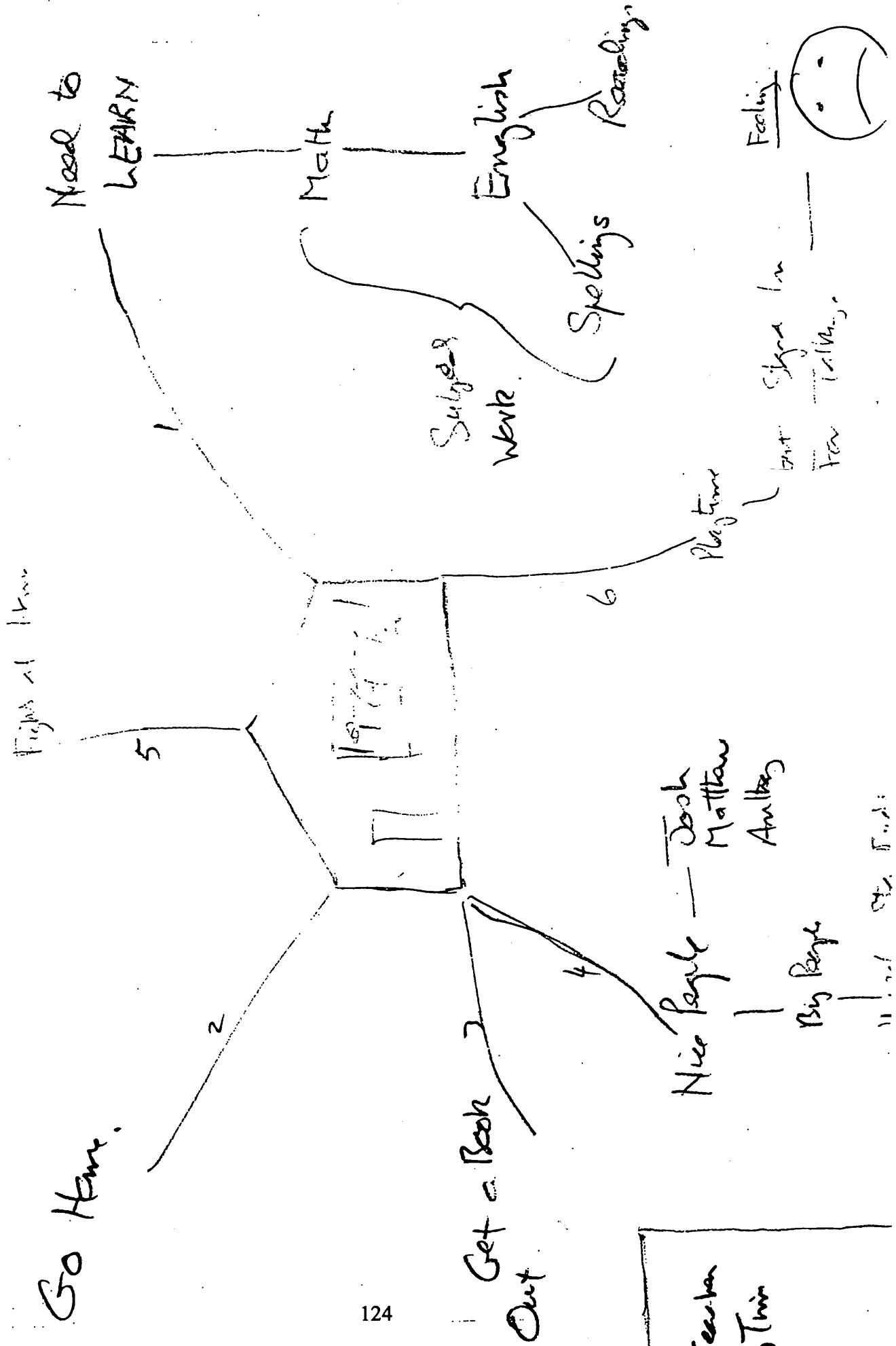
a) Three examples of the concepts maps.

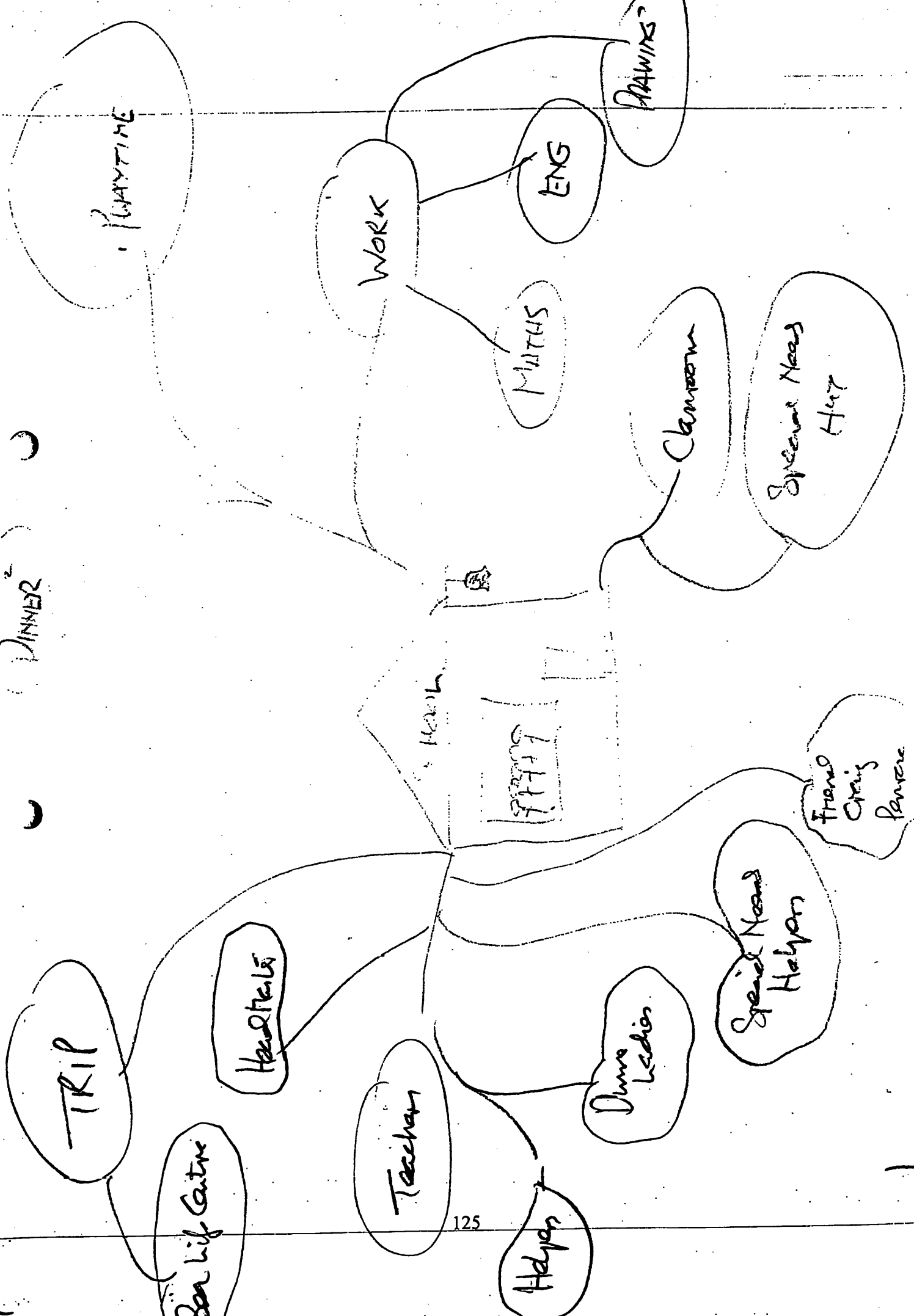
These maps were developed at the beginning of each initial session in order to develop rapport, to form a common focus and to help the pupil begin to think about the broader aspects of school.

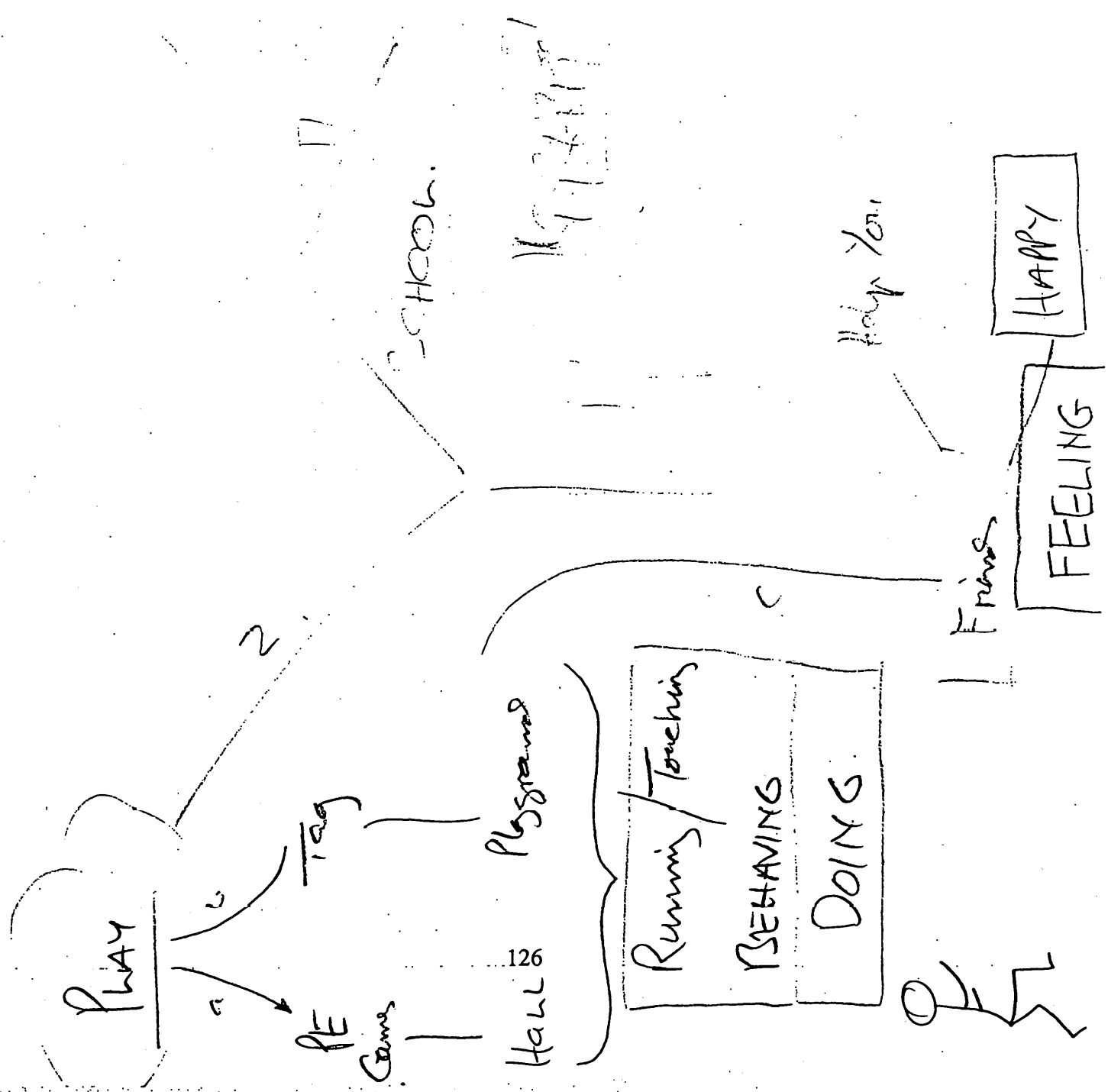
b) Four examples of the conversational data maps.

These represent the data from the pupil conversations as highlighted in the transcriptions and spread into themes in a more visual way.

Wazzy







PLAY

PE Games

Tag

Playground

School

Running/Touching

BEHAVING

DOING

Friends

Help You

FEELING

HAPPY

LEARN

Reading, Drawing, Science, Maths, English

Brain

THINKING



Learning

Listening

Listening with friends

Good Listener

Smile, Not Silly

Well behaved

Good & they'll listen to you.

People who are good

at (help) you learn,

hearing people, good type people.

Not listening back

Other ways of dealing with anger

SARAH

Robert Solving

getting rid of the bullies

Put up with it ... all day

Pro

Telling teacher, make an difference

This just keeps doing it.

Happy

Listening in Maths

You are good if you listen

if you can read

Happy in class when learning

Sitting down concentrating

Don't mind friends in the classroom and doing playtime (various reasons) wants to be noticed included, can be included in the programme

Boys prefer to learn

Not the best
when we will
listen to a friend
that we will listen to this bit

More attention in class

which you

whisper things to you

sure, at you.

Silly people.

Teacher

Talking

because you are

happy

in the game.

Teacher

because

you are

happy

in the game.

Teacher

because

you are

happy

in the game.

Bully Type

Getting up to feel like eggs

but not say's

being force.

Telling

see

angry

For up.

Hot friend

Treat people badly

Say things behind your back

Make you feel alone/lonely

Make you feel sad

As if you have no friends

spending on the playground.

Report them and want to

make angry.

Have a different role than friends

Bad Friend

Say nice things about you

Stand up for you

Help by getting you out of trouble (with the bullies)

Keep you / want people nicely

Ask you (invite) to play with them

Ask you to help them

To give them in their game

help / they will

Listening is important 51

KIMBERLEY

Happy

Worried

When they are in this school

Feel Not Satisfied

Feel cold

Bullies can be all around you

Being kind to you own.

Feel Safe

Protected

Hang around with friends

Keep away from the bullies

Work in brown

Like

Do as you are told.

Not Play

Play/Mess around in lessons

Get told off

get a warning

get moved to another table

* Friend in all pictures / Can have a number of different roles. - against bullies

Doesn't matter the talking

Cautious

Being a friend is reciprocal

I mean from them what I give them

Interaction - Social Relationship / Play

Not Learning

Being bullied by most people means being kicked, punched, chased

and even up with you singing.

Kind to you, even help you

when you are in trouble

Helpful

Get used to a happy you

Helpful

Help you do things

Nice to you

Happy to feel great

Helpful to play with you

Can make them feel happy

Share lunch

Helpful

Who are helpful

Play outside

Help when they bullies

Tell teacher you are in trouble

Talk to bullies

Help in class (giving)

Help people by making sound

They help me / I help them (Placemats)

Be nice to people with poems

Help you by giving bullies to my room.

Help people to play moving around in the

can become a helpful person.

Tell teacher I want to make up

Teacher told bullies

That people want to make up.

Talk to bullies yourself. (And to make up)

Invite people to play with you

Teacher gave out notes they out

Friends can break it up

Be friends by coming together.

Helping

Kindness

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Who are helpful

Play outside

APPENDIX 6.

SCHOOL CONTEXT AND PUPIL INFORMATION.

a) The School Context.

The school selected for the study is a Junior primary school in a rural town in the west country. The school is set within a housing estate which is considered to have higher than average levels of socio- economic deprivation in relation to the overall town, local area, county and national figures. (County Health Authority and the Education Authority (1999) information.) The school is part of the successful bid for status as an Education Achievement zone and also part of the Sure Start Initiative.

The school has 280 pupils in the age range 7-11, of which 45% are on the special needs register, (8 with statements) the majority of which are recognised as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school obtained the lowest aggregate SATs results in the county in the two years during the study with only 17% and 19% of pupils achieving level 4 or above in English. During the academic year 1998/99 there were also eighteen fixed term and three permanent exclusions.

During the year 1999/00 the school staff in conjunction with the education development service planned a school improvement programme to seek a collaborative way forward for the school in the light of the academic results and high level of exclusions. This multi agency and 'interested party' meeting raised a number of themes which were relevant to the research. It is interesting to note that throughout this process of collecting views about the school experience there has been no reference to the view of the child. A Year 6 Class Teacher's comments are worth noting when the discussion was about standards of behaviour. "Children come to school with problems of language deprivation. They come to school to escape not to learn. They have never had a conversation and are not used to being asked their opinions."

6b) The Pupil Information.

The following pupils participated in the research.

	N C Year.	SEN category.	Code of Practice Stage.
a) Michael.	6	Emotional and Moderate learning difficulties.	5
b) Danielle.	5	Emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.	3
c) Kyli,W.	5	Emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.	3
d) Daniel.	5	M l d , emotional and social difficulties.	5
e) Gareth.	5	Emotional and behavioural difficulties	3.
f) Woody.	4	Emotional and social difficulties.	3
g) Sarah.	5	Emotional, social and behavioural.	3
h) Kimberley.	5	Emotional and behavioural.	3
i) Sheldon.	5	Emotional, social and behavioural.	3 / 4
j) Ricky.	6	M l d , emotional and behavioural.	3 / 4
k) Kyli,A.	5	Emotional, social and behavioural.	3
l) Mason.	5	M l d , emotional and behavioural.	5
m) Shane.	4	M l d / emotional and social.	5

APPENDIX 7.

PROGRESS SHEETS.

Data collection progress sheets and case analysis sheets (drawings and PCP).

This appendix contains the following information.

- 1) Individual data collection progress sheet.
- 2) Group data collection progress chart.
- 3) Individual case synopsis of all drawings content.
- 4) Individual overall theme sorting and analysis.
- 5) PCP Triadic analysis grid.
- 6) Individual data analysis progress sheet.
- 7) Picture content description and analysis.

1) Individual data collection progress sheet.

Name

DoB

A/Sen Stage

Category

CT

Data Sources.

Collected

Date

Previously known		
Initial Drawing Collection		
PCP Interview		
A/SenCo Interview		
EP file notes		
Misc Info		

2) Group data collection progress chart.

NAME / year CT Stage	Draw 1 - 2 (3)	Draw 3 (4)	PCP rank rating	SenCo
Michael				
Danielle				
Kyli, W				
Daniel				
Gareth				
Woody				
Sarah				
Kimberley				
Sheldon				
Ricky				
Kyli, A				
Mason				
Shane				

3) Individual case synopsis of all drawings content.

Name

Year

	Title	Content. Brief description	In / out Un - class	Social		Academic		Misc
				Alone	Others	Teacher	Subject	
D1 Initial Pole								
D2 Opposite Pole								
D3 Free Drawing								
D4 Free culminating drawing								

4) Individual overall theme sorting and analysis.

Name	Places / People	Events / Occasions	Actions	Emotions	Omissions
Mind Map					
Draw 1					
Draw 2					
Draw 3					
Discussion					
PCP Inter					
SenCo					

5) PCP Triadic analysis grid.

Name

Name	Similarities	Differences	Constructs	Mics.
Draw 1 Draw 2				
Draw 2 Draw 3				
Draw 3 Draw 1				

6) Individual data analysis progress sheet.

Name

	First Viewing	Second Viewing	Major Themes
Draw 1			
Draw 2			
Draw 3			
Draw 4			
First Visit Initial Field Notes			
First Visit Tapes Discussion			
Second Visit PCP Conversation Taped			
a) Triadic			
b) Landfield			
Second visit Field Notes			
A/SenCo Interview			
Other EP Information			
Misc			

7) Picture description and content analysis.

Picture - 1 2 3 4 (please circle).

Age

Sex

Brief description / title

WHERE	
WHAT IS HAPPENING	
WHAT MESSAGE is being conveyed	
WHO subject/artist Others	
How	
WHEN	
LANGUAGE	
OTHER	